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WAR AND REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA 1914—1917

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GENERAL GOURKO
From a painting by Mrs. Lessly-Cotton

WAR AND REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA 1914—1917

BY

GENERAL BASIL GOURKO

Chief of Russian Imperial General Staff, November 1916—March 1917; Commander-in-Chief of Western Armies, March 1917—June 1917

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

MY WIFE

These pages were written when my wife was working in the capacity of voluntary Sister of Charity in a divisional bandaging detachment in the French Army.

Having arrived in France with me, my wife, after three years of war at the Front, in spite of the anxious days through which she had lived during the time of my imprisonment in the Fortress of Peter and Paul, did not care about entertaining the idea of limiting herself to the life of an ordinary woman, with all the unavoidable results which so little harmonise with the events through which we are living.

As at this time we were taking advantage of the hospitality of France, quite naturally, she wished to devote herself to the French wounded soldiers. She made only one condition; that she should work in a medical institution where there were no other sisters and where the first surgical aid is given to the wounded. By the decision of the French high authorities, she was taken, with regard to her experience, into a surgical bandaging detachment, in order to show if a woman can meet the difficulties which are inseparable from the work in a divisional detachment.

On December 14th, 1917, she entered the 221st Bandaging Detachment. In three months the medical authorities of the place were to give their report. But on March 23rd, 1918, a German 10-inch shell fell into the half-ruined cottage which served as the mess of the medical staff, during their lunch hour. Four doctors, two officer administrators, and my wife were struck by the broken shell. Not long before a munition store was placed near the bandaging detachment, and this was subjected to the German fire. After the catastrophe the detachment was sent to another village. The German shell shortened my wife's earthly existence and her self-denying work. But it is not for me, the man who was so near to her, to give the characteristics of such a remarkable woman. Perhaps some time she will find a just and merited reward. But one can already express the hope that her four years' work at the Front, and even more by her death on the field of honour, she helped to ensure the hope of a better future for the country where there are women of such remarkable energy, of so developed a feeling of duty, women able to work and to sacrifice their lives in the name of self-denial and love to suffering humanity.

PREFACE

In the midst of profound peace, in the active work of economical and social reform, Russia, as by thunderbolt, was struck by the news of approaching mobilisation, and by the urgent necessity of having recourse to the sword to protect her interests and those of the other Slav nations.

To define exactly the position in which the beginning of the war found Russia, it is necessary briefly to survey her political condition at the moment. The country was still feeling the disturbing effects of the Revolution of 1905–6. The intellectual classes which had now received access to and obtained a share in political life and legislation, were engrossed by the struggle with the Government. This turmoil centred specially in the Imperial Duma. With the opening of military action this internal strife of the parties, as in other European countries, and the striving for supremacy between the Imperial Duma and the Government, died down at first, but later became gradually acute again.

This, we observe, was the case with all our Allies and in a certain degree with our enemies. After three years of war, this struggle, becoming still more acute, brought about a crisis which ended in the Revolution of March 1917.

As to Russia's military strength and her readiness to enter the war, it is necessary to remember that the wounds sustained by the Army in unsuccessful war with Japan in the Far East were not yet healed. The imperial Duma, whose representatives were mainly concerned with military affairs, by all its measures incited the Government, without considering the cost, to prepare the Army as quickly as

possible for war, and to take such steps as would save the Russian Army and the Russian military establishment from dependence upon foreign supplies. On the other hand, the Government, basing its policy on the fact that it had never adopted aggressive politics, considered it imperative to observe severe economy in all expenditure and consequently postponed for many years the necessary outlay for the defence of the country. The result was that, in taking military measures, we were far behind our Western neighbours. Finally, the third influence which must be taken into consideration was the realisation of that economic reform which brought about the transition of the peasantry from common to single ownership and its effect on the great mass of the Russian population. It is sufficient to mention that it made it necessary for every peasant landowner to fix new boundaries to his possessions; in most cases, the exchange of one land for another, and finally, for the greater part of the peasantry, the transfer of their farm-buildings from one place to another. This far-reaching reform, though hardly apparent to the stranger, profoundly affected the interests of the great Russian peasant population, which forms more than 90 per cent. of the Army's recruits.

The moral of the Russian Army during the whole three years of the war was deeply affected by these circumstances. Only strict discipline, the habit of obeying his chiefs, and the inborn respect for fate of the Russian peasant, made him conscientiously do his duty, though his thoughts were all at home. Imagine, then, the sensation aroused in him by the spreading Revolution, when at last he understood that all the elements hitherto sustaining him had failed. Dominant in his being was the irresistible desire to return home and to take part in the organisation of his future economical life. And if one adds to this the principle, proclaimed by

the Revolution, of the transfer of the country squires' estates to the peasantry, it will be clear why all the thoughts of the peasant soldier turned towards material questions to the detriment of everything which, till now, had incited him to perform honestly his duties as a soldier. When the Russian soldiers' hostility to the continuation of the war became known to our Allies it excited the most intense astonishment. A comparison was made between the successes won by the young army of France after the great Revolution of the eighteenth century and the debacle of the mighty Russian military machine.

The comparison was, of course, against us. But to what was this due? To forgetfulness, simple ignorance, or intentional perversion of history? If the crowd judges by external signs and superficial knowledge, it is unpardonable that the Press and leaders of thought and policy should form their conclusions on the same meagre premises. Do they forget that the wars of France were the *effect* of the Revolution, that on the fields of Valmy and Jemappes France was protecting her sacred Revolt? In Russia, on the contrary, the war (especially to a superficial observer), was the principal *cause* of the Russian Revolution, as the revolutionary movement of 1905–6 was the result of our failure in Manchuria. In the opinion of the nation, the war had *made* the Russian Revolution. Therefore it had done its work; it was not necessary to continue the war. This was the principal formula of agitators "who were deepening the Revolution," and whose preaching drowned the voices of those who called upon the Russian soldier to fight for the "safety of the Revolution."

But there is another circumstance which entirely precludes the comparison between France's position after the Revolution with that of Russia in 1917. The French Army,

in order to win Valmy and Jemappes, had more than two years of quiet preparation. The whole French Army was recruited from fresh young elements uncorrupted by close association with the effervescence of the Revolution. Why France had an opportunity of two years' preparation for the determined conflict is quite another question, and I shall not touch upon it; its decision did not depend upon France. The conduct of the remainder of the royal troops in France was disgraceful, for these troops, directly after the Revolution, though in another degree, brought about the same scenes of disorganisation which were observed in our country. They also ran shamefully from the weak attack of German and Austrian troops, as our " comrades " ran.

Such were, as was said above, the principal traits which characterised the internal political life in Russia. In Russian external politics the principal attention was directed to the Near East. This attention was especially acute after the so-called Balkan War, 1911–12, which was ended by the disruption of the small Balkan nations, hitherto allied against Turkey. In this unexpected rupture was clearly seen the hand of the diplomacy of the Central Powers. In this case German politics followed the familiar road. This same German policy, after the Japan-China War, awoke the dissension between Russia and Japan. The principal cause of that dissension was the occupation by Russia of the Liaoyang Peninsula, with Port Arthur, accomplished by agreement and in opposition to the plans of Germany who occupied Kiatchao in the Gulf of Pe-Tchi-li. Consequently, in her wish to weaken her probable adversaries, Germany, with the support of the South African Republics, encouraged the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War. With the glad consent of Germany, Italy undertook the colonial war with Tripoli.

During the last few years, all the wars of civilised nations were prepared in one way or another by German diplomacy, guided by the War Lord, William. It is enough here to recall his telegram to the President of the Transvaal Republic, Krüger, at the moment when this small State had to decide for war or peace with England.

Germany, by instigating these wars, counted upon weakening her future adversaries and undermining them economically.

Not without the influence of German diplomacy, then, occurred the dissension among the allied Balkan nations. To encourage this dissension was not difficult; the interests of the nations involved were complex in the extreme, and the division of conquered Turkey was a veritable apple of discord among the Balkan States. But it would be a mistake to say that the Balkan question, and the closely associated Slav question, had in 1914 for Germany any essential importance. We see now, when these events are part of the past, that the question most troubling Germany was her rivalry with England. The fact that Germany hoped not to see England among the number of her enemies in the present war confirms that idea. In this case Germany only followed her usual tactics by attacking and endeavouring to dispose of the weakest, in order to make the struggle with her principal enemy easier. The Governments of the European countries concerned understood, of course, the tendency of Germany, and intended to begin the war at the same time, to deprive her of opportunity of beating her adversaries separately.

Germany found herself within a ring of foes. But this discovery, painful as it must have been to Teuton diplomacy, did not change the Teuton tactics. Germany invariably

takes advantage of every chance to attack her weak adversaries and finish with them so as to deal with her more formidable opponents in turn. The only means of meeting such strategy would be the co-ordination of the forces of all the Allies; but to this, unfortunately, there were so many obstacles that the Allies found themselves unable to carry it out. Will they succeed in the future? It will depend upon the wisdom of their rulers, and in what degree they learn to subordinate personal interest to the general interest of the Alliance.

PARIS,
March, 1918.

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WAR AND REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA 1914-1917

CHAPTER I

THE MOBILISATION OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY

PEACE-LOVING Russia was in the midst of the summer holidays when the storm-clouds, which had hovered over Europe for a month, finally burst.

Petrograd and Moscow were practically deserted; only those people whose duties confined them to the cities were in residence. Dark as the political horizon was after the assassination of the Austrian heir at Serajevo, few imagined that the differences between Austria on the one hand, and Serbia and Russia on the other, were so grave that they could not be settled by ordinary diplomatic procedure.

When it became clear that Austria intended to make a *casus belli* of the incident and to prosecute the conflict with Serbia with all her might, the Russian Government decided to declare a mobilisation of the troops stationed on the Russo-Austrian frontier.

On July 24th it became generally known that a conflict was inevitable. The troops had already left for their summer training camps. Two days later they were directed to return to their winter quarters; orders had been received by the commanders of the military districts that their forces were to undergo preparatory mobilisation.

The first order affected only the districts of Odessa, Kieff,

Petrograd, and Kazan; the hour of mobilisation was to be midnight July 29th–30th. The commanders of these districts had barely time to commence obeying their instructions when fresh orders were received stating that the mobilisation was to be general. This, of course, brought in all the other military districts, and to avoid confusion the mobilisation was fixed to date from midnight July 30th–31st. The following day, at 7.10 p.m., the Kaiser signed Germany's declaration of war on Russia.

The cancellation of the order for the mobilisation of the Southern armies against Austria and the substitution of a general mobilisation was the pretext on which the German Emperor declared war against Russia. The German Government alleged that this furnished undoubted proof that Russia was preparing herself to fight not only with Austria-Hungary in case she attacked defenceless Serbia, but also with Germany. Thus, among other things, the German Emperor, in his autograph note to the President of the United States, transmitted by the American Ambassador, Mr. J. W. Gerard, said that the Tsar's order for the general mobilisation was also directed against Germany.

In the project of the agreement, signed by the Emperors Nicolas II and William II in Björkö in July 1905, which originated exclusively with William II, it was stated:

"If any European Empire attacks another, then the Empire which was allied with the other, bound by this covenant, engages itself to help it with its land and naval forces."

This meant that, to help her future Ally, Germany wished to put into the field all the Russian military forces. Is it possible the German Emperor could suppose that Russia, forced into the necessity of leading the attack against Austria, would not at once put into the field all her military strength? Are we to regard the Emperor William, who

considers himself proficient in military art, as intentionally or unwittingly forgetful of the elementary and fundamental principles of warfare, " to put at once into the field not only all the forces, but at once superiority of weight over the enemy, and not to risk being partially broken "? But then the question really arises: If the German mobilisation was directed only against Russia, why then in this case did Germany not maintain this principle and declare war only with Russia? Immediately prior to the declaration of war Germany was making advantageous proposals to France, hoping to keep her neutral, and was mobilising all her Army and all her Fleet.

The order for partial mobilisation was Russia's reply to the mobilisation of eight Austrian army corps disposed near the Serbian frontier. Austria counter-moved by mobilising all her armies. When this became known in Russia the order was given to mobilise the entire Russian Army.

As evidence how little the outbreak of war was expected in Russia may be mentioned the fact that people were pouring out of the big towns for their summer holidays, while at the same time the Russian soldiery were being conveyed to their summer training camps, which in some cases were a hundred versts from the regimental headquarters where all the equipment necessary for a campaign was stored. This meant that before they could join in the mobilisation they would have to be brought back. Improvisation in such difficult problems as mobilisation is out of the question; the gain of a day, or even an hour, during the first movements may prove of incalculable importance, and for that reason it was decided by the Tsar that there should be a general mobilisation of all Russia's fighting forces.

The order for the preparatory mobilisation inevitably became known to millions of army men and civilians and

drifted through to the ears of our enemies. Had Germany regarded this action, not only as a menace to Austria, but as a desire to enter into hostilities, then surely from that day protestations would have been made to the Russian Government. Instead of protesting the Central European Powers commenced preparing for war, especially as regards their mercantile marine trading in distant waters. Indisputable evidence to this effect afterwards fell into our hands in the form of documents captured by us in East Prussia.

On the evening of July 29th it became known that the Tsar had signed the order for the general mobilisation. All Russia, both civil and military, settled down to work. Justice must be done to the millions of people, both high and low, who came forward to work with such good-will and energy that the results exceeded our most sanguine hopes and expectations, to say nothing of the calculations of the enemy. In keeping with this speed was the efficiency of accomplishment. To enable the complications and difficulties of a general mobilisation within the Russian Empire to be properly appreciated, it is necessary to show the difference between Russia and the Western Empires, in those elements which have the greatest influence in the rapidity of such operations. For 100 square kilometres in European Russia, without the Provinces of Poland, Russia, for every 10,000 inhabitants, had 0.96 kilometres of railways. Germany, in the same proportion, possessed 11.5 kilometres.

Consequently Germany had twelve times more developed railways than European Russia — which was obliged to serve a population 2½ times greater. In addition, in Russia everything had to be transported, during the mobilisation, on an average, five times farther, taking into consideration only European Russia and also the fact that all the troops went in the same direction. The number of

troops conveyed enormous distances would sufficiently illustrate these difficulties. It is necessary to remember how comparatively small is the number of what are known as strategical railways which were free to carry troops to our frontier from the Baltic to the Rumanian borders, where an immediate disposition of an army was necessary. Up till then, however, it was by no means clear to those in command whether Russia would have to face Austria as a single adversary or whether there would be a coalition of the Central Powers.

Historical events moved very quickly, however, and within two days of the order for the general mobilisation it was clear that Russia was threatened with warfare on the whole of her western frontier. Then arose the question in the minds of every one — to whom would Italy and Rumania ally themselves?

There were a few secondary causes which threatened to impede the successful and rapid carrying out of the mobilisation. Quite recently there had been undertaken, but not altogether finished, the withdrawal of several corps of infantry and some divisions of cavalry from parts of the frontier to the Central and other Governments close to the Volga. This measure had been taken on economic, not on military grounds, which proves beyond doubt that Russia was far removed from any idea of aggression towards her neighbours. The fact is that a large concentration of troops on the border provided an undoubted economic gain to the inhabitants of the district, but was detrimental to the interests of the interior provinces, who contributed their share to the upkeep of the army without getting any benefit from their presence within their boundaries.

Another reform which impeded the mobilisation was the system known as the "hidden reserves." All fighting

branches of the Army have formations within their own formations composed of comparatively small numbers of officers and men who have to form the nucleus of the second line of offence; these were the hidden reserves. At the same time all the staffs of the higher military commands had to be formed; this last requirement, with the others, indicates the defects of the system, for naturally the new staff could not at once become familiar with their duties under the new conditions. This affected the training of the staffs for the higher commands, beginning with the army staff and finishing with the staff of the generalissimo. It was necessary at the outset of military operations to form one staff of the generalissimo for the whole Russian Army, three chief commands, including the command for the Caucasus, and eleven army commands, including the Caucasian Army, which made in all fourteen head commands. Officers for the formation of these commands should have served in the Ministry of War in Petrograd, the Imperial General Staff, and the war staffs of the different military districts. All these staffs, however, could only spare a few of their highly placed officers for the formation of the new staffs of the chief army commands; their time was already fully occupied with the mobilisation of the second portion of the Army, together with that already called out.

Naturally the number of officers on these staffs was altogether insufficient for the increased duties and formation of new staffs. This led to the detachment of officers from the front line units to the staffs. At the most critical time, when the work of the staffs was most responsible, when any mistake might cause injury beyond repair, on the activity of the troops at that same moment these staffs were being formed. In these cases the responsibility lay with the commanders who retained their previous positions or who were

appointed to the head of the newly formed fighting units or staffs. Nevertheless, as I have already stated, the mobilisation was carried out very successfully and so quickly that it was impossible to bestow sufficient praise on the army staffs and civil administrations who took part in it, especially in the case of those on whom fell the hardest work before the completion of the complicated and uninterrupted transport arrangements. It was quite a usual occurrence for railway servants, from the highest to the lowest, actuated only by feelings of national necessity and patriotism, to work twenty-four hours on end for days running without once closing their eyes.

So far as the higher commands were concerned, men had already been notified in peace-time as to what appointments they would hold. However, when war was declared these men had little or no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the troops who were to serve under them, or even to know their immediate subordinates.

Naturally this did not enhance the commanders' authority with the men, nor did it make their relations with their assistants any easier. Although the great personages at the head of the higher commands are, without doubt, of great public interest owing to the part they played in recent historical events, the fact that most of these people are still living, and, in course of time, let us hope, will again figure prominently in the government of the country, compels me to confine myself to the barest outlines of their *curriculum vitæ*.

At the head of the Army was appointed the Grand Duke Nicolai Nicolaievitch, the uncle of the Tsar, a man who, though not young, was still full of vigour, indeed one might almost say, of youthful energy. Possessing a very close knowledge of the ways of troops, the Grand Duke had re-

ceived his military education at the Nicolaieffsky Academy of the General Staff in Petrograd. Later he underwent an extensive experience in cavalry commands; a little less than ten years ago he held the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Guards and the Petrograd Military District. Although having the reputation of being severe and fiery, and at times lacking self-control, the Grand Duke had the sympathies of the troops he was to command. As the late Inspector-General of Russian Cavalry he knew more or less all the cavalry leaders and practically all the other prominent officers, as all of them, on taking up a new post, came to Petrograd, and there had to report themselves to the Grand Duke as Commander-in-Chief of the District.

His appointment as Commander-in-Chief on the Russian Army was greeted with pleasure by the entire Russian Press without any dissentient expression of opinion. The Grand Duke was not afforded the opportunity of selecting his nearest assistants; this had been done for him by the Ministry of War.

Although the Grand Duke had had no opportunity of endorsing it, a list of these officers was submitted to the Imperial authority and duly confirmed by the Emperor.

From a war administrative post, General Yanushkevitch was not long before appointed Chief of the General Staff in Petrograd, and when war broke out he was the Grand Duke's nearest assistant.

Yanushkevitch's activities in this post inspired the observation, "Our Chief of the General Staff is still a child," addressed by General Soukhomlinoff, to a close friend of his, a General whose initial is *D*-n.

He had had no war experience, and, as was natural as far as strategical combinations were concerned, came completely under the influence of his most intimate official asso-

ciate, the Quartermaster-General of the General Staff in Petrograd, General Daniloff. For several years Daniloff had held the post of Quartermaster-General of the General Staff Administration. Later in the war he was given service posts, and became commander of an army corps and then of an army. During the Revolution he was Chief of Staff on the Northern Front under General Russky, and held this post for about six months.

General Ivanoff was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the South-western Front Army group. His staff was formed in Kieff from the staff of that district, and General Ivanoff was to command the armies on the South-west Front which were to operate against Austria. Ivanoff's Chief of Staff was General Alexeieff, later to be famous throughout the world as Chief of Staff to the Emperor. General Ivanoff's characteristics were typical of the man who, from very modest ancestry, had worked himself up to the position of the highest importance. His special qualities of character and mind were good nature, kindness, accessibility to juniors, evenness of temper, and great modesty combined with punctilious study of military affairs. Most of his life had been spent with the artillery, including garrison armament. He had his baptism of fire in the Manchurian campaign, while holding the post of Commander of the 3rd Siberian Army Corps. In this campaign, amongst other honours, he won the greatly coveted Order of St. George of the Fourth and Third Degrees, highly prized in all European armies. Although his fighting activities in Manchuria were neither very varied nor extensive, they gave him wide experience. In Manchuria he was reproached with being completely under the influence of his Chief of Staff; but, if this was the case, it could only have been of service to the nation, for it revealed the high talents of General Alexeieff.

Alexeieff, appreciating his influence on General Ivanoff, was able to work out strategical plans, knowing that he would be compelled to bear the full responsibility for these decisions on his own shoulders. Here, then, did Alexeieff receive that preparatory training which fitted him for the high duties he was to undertake later on.

General Alexeieff spent the first ten years of his military service as junior officer of one of the less important infantry regiments quartered in Mohileff. In this position he received his baptism of fire during the campaign on the Danube of 1877–8, his first, although very limited, experience of fighting. Only in the tenth year of his service did he decide to take his examination at the Nicolaieffsky Military Academy, and when he did so he finished brilliantly. The Manchurian campaign found him Quartermaster-General; after the battle of Mukden, during a period of comparative calm, he became Chief of Staff to the 3rd Army. This work gave him extensive war experience, especially in staff duties; this experience he turned to very useful purpose in the European War.

His character may be described without reserve, for it is of the first order. Even in the highest position he retained an unusual modesty, accessibility, and simplicity which warmly commended him to all who had to deal with him directly. He could not be reproached with exceptional softness, for he took measures of necessary severity to bring into effect a decision once made. If there was any shortcoming in his character it was only in dealing with his nearest assistants and colleagues, on whose failings he was wont to look much too tolerantly. However, even the sun has its spots, and what General Alexeieff is mainly reproached with is that he took too much work on himself. He worked out many questions and undertook much prepara-

tory labour, even down to the minutest detail, instead of devolving these tasks on subordinates and putting upon them the responsibility for their conscientious and thoughtful fulfilment. Naturally such methods gave him a great deal of trouble, and possibly overtaxed his strength, causing the illness which unnoticed crept upon him in October 1916, and nearly killed him during the days following. Only after four months' rest in the sunny Crimea was he sufficiently recovered to resume his duties of Chief of the Imperial General Staff. This took place only a week before the Revolution. Later, although for a very short time, he became Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies. In this latter capacity his work was but little changed, for as Chief of the Staff he practically fulfilled the rôle of Commander-in-Chief when the Emperor Nicolai II was called to the direction of other state affairs.

One must think and hope that the Russian people will again receive this gifted, high-minded soldier, and will again afford him the opportunity of service to the fatherland he so passionately loves, to which he has already given forty years and more of his life's most irreproachable and earnest work.

General Gilinsky was appointed Commander-in-Chief on the North-western Front or Army Group. In regard to the personality of this General I can say but little. In the Manchurian campaign he held the post of Chief of Staff to the Viceroy and also to the Commander-in-Chief. He left behind him no specially valuable record, and his influence on the war can hardly be called successful. Notwithstanding this, a short time prior to the present war he held the post of Chief of the General Staff, having been chosen by the Minister of War, General Soukhomlinoff. When the post of Commander of the Forces and Governor-

General of Warsaw fell vacant, Gilinsky exerted all his influence towards obtaining it and succeeded. This appointment only proved, I am sorry to say, that at this time appointments were made to the most responsible and important posts for various reasons, least of which was the suitability of the person appointed. Becoming Commander of the Warsaw Military District he was then appointed Commander-in-Chief on that point in the event of war with Germany, though his fighting qualities, as shown in the Japanese War, were not such as fitted him for such an office. Later events only confirmed the impression of his unfittedness for his responsibilities as Commander-in-Chief. At the outbreak of hostilities, when he should have been working for the co-ordination of the operations of Generals Samsonoff and Rennenkampf, he failed utterly to fulfil this necessity.

Among the men who received appointments to the command of armies I must mention Generals Samsonoff, Brussiloff, and Rennenkampf, the first two as having played an extraordinarily prominent part in the early days of the war, and the latter as having acquired in the Japanese War, as in the Manchurian campaign of 1900, the reputation of a soldier of exceptional energy, determination, courage, and military capability. I am sorry to say at the same time that his moral reputation was considerably damaged. Notwithstanding this last condition, he was, just prior to the war, appointed commander of the East Prussian frontier forces in the Vilna Military District, where earlier he had commanded the 3rd Army Corps. This appointment was criticised by many on account of his moral reputation, but at the same time applauded as the appointment of a man who would give his country good service in time of war. Consequently, when his military fortune changed, the pub-

lic remembered his German descent. It was even reported that his own brother was serving in the German Army. In any case, he suffered in the same manner as did many whose military fortune had deserted them. The public "mouth," searching for reasons and excuses for a military defeat, invariably expresses itself in the word "traitor" and searches for substantiation where there can be no possible foundation. In any case, General Rennenkampf's German ancestry was an undoubted fact; but against this it must be remembered that every one who came into touch with him was invariably imbued with the certainty that all his sympathies were for Russia, and especially for her Army, in which he had served for forty years, and had earned a brilliant military reputation. More will be said of Rennenkampf in the account of later events. I can state here, however, that his characteristics were great boldness, decisiveness, and resolution in working out a plan. France, of course, had to be thankful to him for her victory on the Marne and consequently the saving of Paris from invasion by the Germans.

General Samsonoff's personality is slightly less remarkable. Like General Rennenkampf, he was trained at the Nicolaieffsky Military Academy, and in the Manchurian War, where he generally commanded cavalry units, he gained a very fair reputation. Morally, Samsonoff was irreproachable. This inspired the love and respect of his troops. Though possessed of a brilliant mind, reinforced by a good military education, he had never had the opportunity to reveal any greatness of character or decision.

General Brussiloff's character is less capable of analysis. His military career had given him no opportunity to test his abilities. Most of his service had been passed in the School for Cavalry Officers, where he had more to do with the

technicalities of troops than with their fighting uses. This service at least enabled him to perfect his theoretical knowledge, and to study military affairs, which was more than necessary to him as he had not received the higher education of the Nicolaieffsky Academy. Nevertheless, his activities in this war show that without doubt he possesses a certain military ability. He is not without a certain amount of impressiveness, which more than once showed itself when the troops under him were in a difficult position. His name was scarcely known amongst the Russian troops at the beginning of the war, but his victorious career in his first fighting duties quickly brought him to the front among the most popular personalities. But, of course, what attracted most attention was his victorious advance in the spring of 1916 to the aid of Italy when the latter country was so hard pressed by the Austrians. This was the zenith of his rising star. Later, he gradually lost his hold on public opinion. What led to his fall was his extreme opportunism after the Revolution of 1917. This opportunism was taken advantage of to the full by the Temporary Government of which Prince Lvoff was President and he was given the post of Commander-in-Chief at Headquarters, but this only finally ruined him in the eyes of the intelligent classes of the Russian public and especially in the eyes of all the Russian officers. Therefore his resignation of the post of Commander-in-Chief astonished nobody, and nobody felt any special regret about it. All the same, one must say there were more positive than negative sides to his character.

CHAPTER II

THE STRATEGICAL DEVELOPMENT

BEFORE speaking of the strategical development of the Russian armies from the Baltic Sea to the Rumanian frontiers, a cursory glance should be given at the map of our western frontier zones. Here what catches the eye is the exceptional position taken up by part of the late Polish Kingdom under the sovereignty of Russia.

Russian Poland, extending deep into the territory of our opponents, on one side brings us near to the most important and most populous of their centres, but on the other side represents a terrain which could easily be taken in the pincers of their armies. Only our enormous superiority in forces might have made it possible to take advantage of the advanced position of Poland as a starting-point salient for making an invasion of Germany and Austria. If we did not bring this superiority to bear in regard to simultaneous fighting, the Western neighbours to Russian Poland would be able to weaken our strategical position, especially at that stage of the war when our opponents could place superior forces in the field earlier than we could.

For this reason, our strategical plans never included the defence of that part of Poland which lies on the left or west bank of the Vistula, and why, during the course of many years, we did not fortify our actual frontiers, but a line on the River Vistula. But after the Manchurian Campaign, when the Russian Government utilised every opportunity to reduce military expenditure, the idea arose of

carrying our defensive lines even farther eastward to the lines of Brest-Litovsk. Sad to say, this idea received confirmation and, not long before the beginning of war operations, all the old fortified outworks around Warsaw and near the fortress of Zegrje, at the junction of the rivers Bug and Narev, had been destroyed by explosives. This plan, however, had a great many opponents, and met with much well-founded criticism. The war censorship conditions did not admit of ventilation of this question in the Press for the public enlightenment, and therefore it is difficult to judge what motives had impelled the Minister of War, General Soukhomlinoff, to take this serious measure.

Although at that time I was in no way connected with the central war administration, I nevertheless took advantage of the first interview I had with the Minister of War to bring up this question.

Without going into details, I will only say that the Minister gave me the following explanation. (This was in 1910, two years before the work of destroying the Warsaw forts was taken in hand): —

The fortresses of Warsaw, Novogeorgievsk and Zegrje, composing the so-called fortified triangle, were, according to the opinions of the engineers and especially of the artillery experts, completely out of date at this time. To bring them up to modern requirements demanded the construction of a completely new belt of separate forts, and, so to speak, the creation of a completely fortified province; but this, in the first place, would require enormous expenditure, and in the second place would entail the inconvenience of including in this province a town with a million inhabitants. The solution of this difficulty, according to General Soukhomlinoff, was to embrace Novogeorgievsk in a new belt of completely modern forts including within it the fort

of Zegrje and the external fortified outworks of the fortress of Warsaw, and bringing the latter to a modern condition.

This would have given them the advantage, at less cost, of possessing fully modern fortresses, excluded from the surroundings of the fortresses of the town of Warsaw, and further the town itself and the roads leading through the town would have been dominated by the fortress camp of Novogeorgievsk. This would have taken away any advantage from an opponent who wished to capture Warsaw before he had taken the Novogeorgievsk fortresses.

It was impossible not to allow that these arguments were sound and practical under the conditions of that day.

But why, instead of bringing this plan into effect, they commenced by destroying the Warsaw fortress, even before confirming the line of the new belt of forts round Novogeorgievsk, and, worse still, afterwards destroyed the forts near Zegrje, I never have been and never shall be able to explain. I never got another opportunity of speaking to General Soukhomlinoff about this.

In working out our strategical plan, there was invariably the clash of two opinions. Having in view the necessity of fighting with two opponents, one side advocated the concentration of the main force against the strongest opponent, Germany, while opposing the weaker opponent, Austria, with comparatively negligible forces.

Others dwelt on the wisdom of at first delivering the main blow against Austria, and finishing with her first and then striking with all our available forces against Germany. Each side advanced very weighty theoretical and practical arguments in favour of this or that plan. To discuss them all would take too long and necessitate too much specialising. The plan of strategical development that began to

be realised at the beginning of the mobilisation in 1914, was founded on the second idea, namely, that of directing the main blow against Austria, and advancing against Germany afterwards.

It is very difficult to ascertain how far the Germans were informed of our plan of operations. But doubtless they were able to judge theoretically that the Russian Army could not strike simultaneous blows against Austria and Germany. Actually Germany was in the same position as ourselves; she had to decide against whom to direct the main blow, against France or against Russia.

She decided to deliver the main blow against France, as an opponent who would be earlier prepared to deliver a decisive blow. But it can hardly be doubted that Germany knew the fundamental outlines of our plan of strategic development by studying various signs of our fighting preparations, not to mention the help received through bribery and by traitors, and even spies. These conditions made the operations of Germany easier, and gave her a large scope of freedom in directing the main body of her forces against France, whilst keeping a comparatively weak body on her frontiers in East Prussia and almost entirely ignoring her frontiers to the west of the River Vistula. Germany also reckoned on the slowness of our mobilisation, therefore stirred up Austria to commence as early as possible her advance into Podolia and Volhynia, and along the right banks of the Vistula for the capture of Warsaw from the east. This plan very probably would have received full realisation if our advance, which took place earlier than the Germans had expected, had not interfered with it. The result was that we and the Austrians came face to face while we were advancing to make our main blow. In East Prussia, our advance was due to a con-

siderable extent to the break through which General Rennenkampf organised with all the means at his disposal, notwithstanding the restraining instructions he constantly received from General Gilinsky.

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The great European War in 1914 found me at the head of the 1st Army Cavalry Division, which in peace time had its quarters in Moscow, and her neighbouring towns. I had commanded this division already for three years and a little over, and was intimately acquainted with all its officers from the oldest of the seniors to the last joined junior. Entering the war at the head of this division was specially to my liking, as I felt sure that, amongst those under me, I should find trustworthy coworkers in fulfilling the most intricate and risky fighting problems which might fall to the cavalry. We were given two days for our mobilisation and collection, not counting two days for what is called " preparation for mobilisation." Actually we were able to move and entrain in twenty-four hours, the time we took to prepare our frontier cavalry in peace times.

By the regiments of my division the news of the coming campaign was received with great enthusiasm and an ardent desire to put into practice all that knowledge which the troops accumulate by long years of hard, peaceful work. During all the time taken in mobilising and moving from our quarters in Moscow and its neighbourhood to the town of Suwalki where we detrained there was not a single individual instance of trouble amongst the soldiers which could be regarded seriously, so well did each one understand his duty.

Among the population after the mobilisation, as far as we could gather, the distinguishing characteristic was a

calm and general desire to fulfil their duty and to bring as much help as possible to the affairs of the nation. Therefore there were no specially noisy demonstrations in the streets or in public gatherings, but everywhere could be felt the heightened spirit and mind and the understanding that Russia and her Allies had taken up arms in a just cause. There was no appearance of any kind of chauvinism or aggressiveness, or any kind of hatred to the enemy; but, on the other hand, everybody spoke out their firm conviction that in this just cause victory must be on our side.

The same spirit was noticeable right along our route to the front. The journey was performed without a hitch, and on the given day (August 6th) towards nightfall we arrived in Suwalki. By the end of the next day all my division had bivouacked in the neighbourhood and in the dragoon barracks near the town. We were now included as one of the units of the 1st Army, then under General Rennenkampf. At this time the Staff of the 5th Rifle Division was in Suwalki. Regiments of this division had already been moved forward to our frontiers, and were holding it from the well-known Rominten Forests and for sixty kilometres to the south. These were the Rominten Forests to which the Emperor William used to come every year, accompanied by his most intimate friends and members of his family to hunt deer. He used to invite the Russian authorities, amongst whom very often was the Governor of Suwalki. Amongst the visitors used to be the well-known Colonel Miassoiedoff, who at that time was Chief of the Gendarmerie Administration in the frontier town of Verjbolovo opposite to Eidkuhnen, about 100 kilometres north of Rominten. Miassoiedoff was executed in 1915, having been found to be a spy.

Having arrived in Suwalki, as senior, I immediately placed

myself over the Rifle Division, and took upon myself the duties of temporary Governor-General, as the Governor had left with his administration, as far as I can remember, for Kovno.

Reporting all this to General Rennenkampf, I set to work to inspect the frontiers and the Sharpshooters units which had already had passages at arms with small German units quartered some 20 kilometres beyond the frontiers. At the same time I commenced giving small problems to single units of my division, whose main forces were still in the town of Suwalki.

Three years' service with the regiments of my division had, of course, made me very intimate with all their personal qualities, but I could not help feeling anxious as to what extent they would prove trustworthy weapons in my hands when responsible fighting problems had to be solved. Every military man, of course, understands what a tremendous part the personality of a chief plays, either in small or large army combinations. He knows, too, what a chief's example means; but I am sorry to say that the majority understand "personal example" to mean, for the chief, first of all that he must show an example of courage in battle, whereas actually this is of no more consequence than a personal example from the chief in all the routine of the troops, which must be shown in his daily service life. In taking part in battle, one must learn, first of all, that every man going into action cannot but understand that he risks his life, and that only at that risk can he obtain the results demanded of him. Consequently a man must be fired by some feeling which would dominate the fear, which, more or less, almost every man undergoes in the moment of serious danger. Such a feeling may be the consciousness of duty understood in its widest sense, or fear which is more pres-

ent than the danger of the enemy bullet or sword. Perhaps this is not altogether flattering to humanity, but only in this way can one justify a sentence of death on a traitor to his duty, who, for example, leaves the field of battle. However, this is an extreme measure, and a Chief's duty is to exhaust all means to prevent a situation demanding recourse to the death sentence. Neglect of these rules may have the most grievous consequences, and the unnecessary spilling of blood that it may cause doubtless lies heavily on the conscience of the Chief who allows it to occur. Therefore, one of the means for successfully carrying out military operations is the use by the Chief of extraordinary severity with his subordinates; at the same time every Chief should remember that this rigour will not be a reproach to him, but will tend to increase the respect he is held in if he himself is subject to the harsh conditions he has imposed.

During my three years of service in Moscow I had never any occasion to show any special severity to my subordinates. The reason of this was that not one of them at any time seriously refused to do his service duties.

I never doubted that they would show the same loyalty under fighting conditions. However, the difference between peace work and war is so great that a reputation earned in peace is not always to be maintained in war.

On this account I felt afraid that my subordinates might conclude that I should not be able on necessity to use extreme severities in war time. In view of this I wished that fate would give me the opportunity, at the outset of the fighting activities of my division, to exhibit a concrete example of severity, feeling perfectly sure that then I should be freed from further necessity of resorting to extreme measures. Such an opportunity was given me.

One of the first operations, which I had to entrust to

my units under fighting conditions, consisted of sending three separate squadrons one from each regiment in the division, and the sotnia (100) of Cossacks in different directions into German territory to find out the strength and positions of the enemy lying in front of the regiments of the 5th Rifle Division. Each squadron and sotnia commander was instructed as to the route to be followed, and the zone to be reported on; they were to do this by small parties of scouts.

Actually, the three squadron commanders decided to unite their forces, and move on one and the same route. Having carried out the operation they returned the following day with their reports, and at the same time did not hide the fact that they had not travelled by the routes that I had instructed them to use and giving me different good reasons for this. I determined to punish them. Calling together all the officers, I placed before them my verdict that the two squadron commanders, having joined up to the third commander, and therefore followed a route other than the one I had indicated, were to be degraded from their squadrons until such time as their service in the field justified my restoring them to their commands. Besides this, I took advantage of this chance to show my subordinates how I understood the execution of a given order, and what disasters might result from disobeying an order. I explained to them that in war time no fighting result is gained otherwise than at the price of blood, but that neglect of an order very often results in unnecessary shedding of blood. I told them that I was ready to accept the responsibility of bloodshed, but only under the condition that they would allow nothing to stand in the way of my orders being fulfilled to the utmost. On the other hand, I indicated that if my orders were not fulfilled, then all the responsibility for

needless slaughter would lie on those who had not followed the orders given. I never had occasion to test the effect of my words, but I must say that during the three and a half months in which I was commanding this division I never again had to use severe or violent measures. And here it should not be forgotten that during this stage of the campaign cavalry officers had constantly to carry out orders singly and without any kind of control by their seniors. I will mention one characteristic episode. Working nearly all the time on the left flank of our First Army, I had constantly to send separate squadrons and sotnias to observe our direction or locality. Usually these squadrons and sotnias were exchanged for fresh ones every three days. In consequence of some movement affecting the whole division, I could not send a sotnia of Cossacks for the relief of those observing the neighbourhood of the small German fortress of Lötzen. The commander of the sotnia having been on duty there three days, decided that his period of duty was over, without waiting for the relief, rejoined the division, and covering more than sixty versts came to me with his report. Having listened to him, I merely told him that he had violated the instructions given him, and that therefore he must immediately resaddle and with his Cossacks return to the place. The result was that when our troops commenced a general retreat out of East Prussia several days later, I had great difficulty in getting this sotnia back to me, because notwithstanding that the Germans attacked them from all sides, and threatened completely to surround them, the commander remained on the spot until he received the order to retire from a Cossack who was lucky enough to get through to him.

CHAPTER III

FIRST FIGHTING OPERATIONS

INFORMATION coming in at that time from our reconnoitring patrols showed that some kind of concentration of German troops was taking place near the town of Marggrabowa, sixteen kilometres from our positions. Evidently similar news had been received by General Rennenkampf's staff. In consequence I received an order from General Rennenkampf to use all means by scouting, or even fighting, to ascertain the size of this concentration.

Having the 5th Rifle Division as well as my Cavalry Division at my disposal, I decided to make a demonstrative advance in force, that same night, on a front of about twenty-five to thirty kilometres, with cavalry columns and an infantry column. The plan was to send the cavalry columns south and north of Marggrabowa, and the infantry column direct on the town itself, with the calculation that the cavalry columns must get into touch with the enemy several hours earlier than the infantry. Such an appearance of cavalry on the railway line, Marggrabowa-Gumbinnen, would, without fail, induce the Germans to send reinforcements out of Marggrabowa to the railroad where the cavalry were. Our scouts would find out the strength of the reinforcements sent out in this way and the Marggrabowa garrison would be weakened and thus make it easier for the infantry column to capture the town. Marggrabowa was defended from the east by lakes, part of the system of the

Masurian Lakes, and an approach to the town was only possible across two narrow isthmuses easily defended by comparatively negligible forces. The outside cavalry columns had their artillery with them, the firing of which must reveal their presence. My calculations were also founded on the fact that the Germans would use every effort to be superior in strength so as not to risk even a partial defeat in the first engagement on this part of the front.

The infantry column was composed of one rifle regiment with a field battery, under the command of Colonel Taranovsky, who subsequently commanded the Russian division in Salonika. As this column's operation was a most difficult one, and as this was the first engagement for the Rifle regiments I decided to be with this part of the force. The whole of the cavalry division left Suwalki on the eve of August 11th for the purpose of crossing the frontiers before daylight. The infantry column which I joined just before dawn was to cross the frontiers an hour later, when the cavalry patrols had got into touch with the enemy infantry defending the Marggrabowa-Gumbinnen railroad.

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With the Rifle column I crossed the Prussian frontier at dawn. At daybreak, to our great astonishment, we saw a large number of fires ahead, the heavy smoke from which, in the calm morning air, rose in thick black columns. By the positions of the smoke columns I could tell that they agreed with the movements of the three cavalry columns I had sent out. Naturally, the first thought was, that my cavalry units were burning the farms in their locality, destroying the forage and unthrashed grain. As this did not fall in with my plans, I immediately sent them orders to stop this incendiarism. But before I received the reply

from the commanders of these columns I was able to satisfy myself that it was not any of their work. What the actual cause of these fires was we never found out, but as we advanced farther into East Prussia we nearly always saw the same picture. In conjunction with the approach of any considerable body of Russian troops, thick columns of smoke started from some store filled with forage or straw, usually from the farms nearest to the head of the column. In this the very line of direction and speed of our columns was seen from a great distance off. Naturally the only thing to do was to adopt some kind of repressive measures, although this caused us a great deal of trouble. With the slightest sign of an advance by us, the local population fled towards the west, carting away their most valued possessions. This appearance was so general, that it could only have been due to arrangement by the German authorities. The only human beings we at any time saw in these deserted villages were very old women and men who could barely drag one foot after the other. Very often we met, but oftener observed disappearing in the distance, cyclists who were without exception boys from twelve to fourteen years of age.

So hurried was the flight of the inhabitants that often our advanced units found in the houses prepared food still warm; more than once the meal had not been finished, and the cattle still were chained to their stalls in the stables. There were cases where the cattle remained without food and drink for several days in these farms. If our troops happened to pass them by the poor beasts drowned all the noises in the neighbourhood with their constant lowing. Naturally, our men let them straight out into the fields, with the idea that sometimes they might prove useful for our troops, following on. But if these fires were to direct

the Germans, they also served us to a certain degree by showing where our columns were much more quickly than reports could have reached us. In this way, I clearly saw that my cavalry columns had reached the railway, some fifteen to twenty kilometres away, some two hours from the time they crossed the frontiers. Evidently they were fighting, for we could hear the artillery. After a couple of hours, the cannonading became more intense, which showed me that the Germans had sent artillery units as reinforcements. We were most scantily supplied with telegraph and telephone equipment and personnel. In actual fact there was only one unit of sixty men per divisional staff. There were trained men in the regiments, but they had no telegraphic material. These men had not yet become accustomed to lay lines as quickly as would be required by a moving cavalry column.

In the middle of August, when cavalry units constantly moved over fifty and more kilometres per day, this organisation had so far been put in order, that, taking advantage of the German telegraph posts and wires, they added to and cut away from them, so that our columns and staffs were connected up to their rear with telephone wires not later than an hour after their arrival at the place where they intended spending the night.

I am sorry to say that at this time the intimate connections between the staffs of large units was insufficiently assured. I was always followed by a section of wireless telegraphy, but I could only take advantage of these installations at our night stopping-places and then only to communicate with the army staff, because the infantry army corps had not as yet been allotted stations of wireless telegraphy. Knowing their direction from the fires that had broken out, the infantry column with which I was slowly

advancing, with only weak opposition from small German infantry patrols, moved forward toward the lake isthmuses, over which were macadamised roads leading to Marggrabowa. I had to quicken the advance of the infantry, as I feared that the weak cavalry columns, from each of which only some 500 rifles could be used, would not be able to continue fighting long with the German infantry which had been sent out from Marggrabowa. There was also the danger that at the close of the fight these infantry units would return to Marggrabowa and take up a position on the isthmus or reinforce those that were there already, and in this way, or at any rate make more difficult, my entry into the town. My chief aim was to capture the telegraph and post offices in Marggrabowa with all the correspondence, from which we could get most valuable information about the enemy.

My plans were partly right; the return of the German infantry and artillery, sent, as I had supposed, out of Marggrabowa, was interfered with owing to the destruction of the railway lines and small defensive posts by some of our cavalry. This delayed the movement for some hours, at places for possibly a day.

When our infantry neared the isthmuses they found them held by small units of infantry and cyclists (as we found out later). What strength they were in we did not ascertain because the majority of the cyclists retreated to the west and south-west of the town, only leaving about sixty cycles on the road. They were immediately taken possession of by our infantry, and even by part of our cavalry. While the battle for the isthmuses was going on I gave orders for the nearest cavalry column to join me; this was composed of lancer and dragoon regiments, so that, when the infantry had taken the isthmus and secured their retreat, two cav-

alry regiments and a battery of artillery were to move fo ward to capture Marggrabowa, to take the railroad, tel graph, post, and telephone stations, and to destroy the completely. I remember that one of the same officers c the dragoons, who two days earlier had been degraded fro his command of a squadron, was ordered to seize the rai way station. This he did at the head of half a squadro most successfully, quickly, and cleverly. Less fortunate wa the other whom I had degraded, the one who commande the hussar squadron. Taking part in the fight in the ne cavalry column, he advanced at the head of his unit and wa killed. This was the first officer the division had los After half an hour's fight, the impetuous movement of th riflemen dislodged the Germans from the isthmus and gav us access to the outskirts of the town. By this time ou lancers were coming up. As they approached the isthmu already occupied by the infantry, I dismounted the squadron and ordered them to seize the small approach to Marggra bowa in extended order. When I came up, I dismounted and Captain Makedonsky, the commander of the lance squadron, informed me that only a few minutes before, German motor-car had reached him from Marggrabowa showing the signs of the Red Cross, and offering their serv ices if we had any wounded. But before Makedonsk could answer if wounded were requiring attention, the drive of the motor-car, taking advantage of the fact that th road there was wider, turned the car round and quickl disappeared into the town. I explained to Makedonsk that this was "a hospital motor-car" which did not wis to give us medical assistance so much as to help the Ger man scouting troops that had been defending the Marggra bowa approaches, and I advised him in future to stop suc motor-cars and send them on to my staff under escort. B

this time the whole of Marggrabowa, lying on a slope towards Lake Oletzko, was before my eyes.

One could see without field glasses that white flags with red crosses were over all the large buildings. We found out later that several of these really were fitted up as hospitals; the others, as the inhabitants said, were predestined for this purpose, all the schools being also so used. As this was the first time that my regiment had been engaged in my presence, I thought it right, having given all instructions, to join the first lancer squadron; and so, along with Captain Makedonsky and the front chain of dismounted lancers, I made my way towards the Marggrabowa approaches, where rifle shots at occasional intervals could be heard from the gardens and windows of buildings surmounted by the Red Cross. Somewhere on one side we could hear a machine gun, and two of ours commenced answering it. The German machine gun, which was evidently being fired from the window of some high building, stopped. Our line of lancers moved steadily on to the gardens which surround the pretty town, shooting now and again. I am well aware that I had no business to be in the front attacking lines, but there were many reasons which made me go, contrary to the letter of the rule which says that the chief must not devote himself in any one small part, as it is invariably harmful to the course of the whole battle. These fundamental laws, of course, are not known by every soldier, but soldiers are strongly influenced by the presence of their chief in their immediate vicinity. Or that in case of necessity the chief could show himself amongst them in the very foremost lines. I did not doubt that my presence in the firing line would be known throughout all the regiments of my division, and would afterwards enable me to avoid actually appearing in the front lines, and risk los-

ing the total direction of the battle. One must not forget that in field fighting, much more than in position fighting or so-called trench warfare, every kind of unforeseen thing and surprise occurs. Therefore it is imperative that the chief must issue commands more quickly and take timely measures to parry such occasions.

By this time, the lancers, to whom had been added the dismounted dragoon squadrons, had gradually penetrated the approach to the town, and as they advanced the intensity of the German fire decreased. It was apparent by this time that the Germans had no intentions of seriously defending the town, but preferred to evacuate it.

By the time the dismounted cavalry units entered the town the firing had completely died down. The town presented an absolutely peaceful picture. Almost all the shops were closed, but they were not barricaded, and evidently had only just stopped trading. Many people were looking out of the windows with interest; they were mostly women. To questions as to where the telegraph, post, and telephone stations were, they readily gave reply. We found these buildings in the only town square. My staff immediately arranged parties to seize all the correspondence, and to destroy the telegraph and telephone instruments. To destroy the telephone installations on the roofs, Lieutenant Shataloff, an officer of the field artillery acting as adjutant to the chief of my field artillery division, was given this work at his own request. Having climbed to the roofs at first he gave himself up to fulfilling his task completely and whole-heartedly, and not satisfied with breaking up insulators and cutting wires, handed over this work to his men and commenced scanning the neighbourhood and especially the neighbouring country roads, all the time reporting to the staff officer, standing in the square, what he saw.

Some time later on a report was brought from him that on one side small bodies of enemy cyclists could be seen rapidly retreating in various directions, and that on the other side the movement of some kind of column was observed towards the southern outskirts of Marggrabowa held by only very weak units of my dismounted cavalry.

The movement did not threaten to cut me off from the isthmuses held by my infantry; but as I had no intention of holding the town, and as my main object of finding out what forces the Germans were concentrating in Marggrabowa had been already fulfilled and the extensive post and telegraph correspondence, amongst which were a considerable number of letters addressed to units intended to take up their quarters round about Marggrabowa, had been seized, I considered that my business in the town was completed. When I came out of the buildings where I had been watching the sorting of the postal correspondence, to my astonishment I found the square filled up with dismounted men leading the horses which it is their duty to hold whilst a fight is in progress. They, when the firing ceased, had brought the horses up, probably calculating that the dismounted troopers would be remounted and sent in pursuit of the retreating enemy. What, however, was completely out of place was the presence in the square of a whole horse battery complete with ammunition carts. This can only be explained by the inexperience of the battery commander and his intense desire to move forward. The approaching German column might at any minute have deployed and opened fire on the town if they had received information from their cyclists that the Russian troops had filled up the streets and square of the town. I do not think that the presence of the Red Cross on the buildings, generally speaking with somewhere about a hundred or so sick and

wounded, or solicitude for the inhabitants, would have deterred the Germans from opening fire on the town. They understood very well that troops that had never been fired on might become very nervous when shells exploded in the narrow streets.

I sent a strong scouting party to watch the direction the German columns were taking, and to hold up their front patrols. I gave orders for the town to be evacuated and for the troops to go toward the nearest northern isthmus which was held by our men. The evacuation of the town commenced soon after noon. The retirement was carried out without any special incident, and without pressure from the enemy. Our expectation of valuable information from the seized correspondence from the post office was realised.

It was in these days that German aeroplanes first made their appearance, Taubes flying over the camp continually. The first impression they made on the Russian troops, very few of whom had seen an aeroplane before, was remarkable; immediately an aeroplane hove in view the men would rush for their rifles and blaze aimlessly away until their officers succeeded in convincing them it was quite useless. After a time, the majority of the men regarded the coming of enemy aeroplanes with equanimity, although there were cases of individual firing which in the beginning could never be stopped. Sometimes this bad example became so contagious that men would fire round after round at an aeroplane thousands of yards high; on one occasion an orderly room clerk emptied all the barrels of his revolver at a machine well out of rifle range. As it was impossible to distinguish with the naked eye between the black cross of the German machines and the red, white, and blue circle of our own, some of our own machines were shot down by rifle fire while descending to their aerodrome. This was the reason for an

order that all our aeroplanes should fly low over our lines so that they could be recognised, but even this arrangement hardly met the situation, because reinforcements were always arriving, mostly men from the older classes, who had never seen an aeroplane, and merely regarded it as something to be shot at. They seriously thought that such a cunning idea as an aeroplane could only emanate from and be used by a German. Of course these newly arrived units soon became accustomed to aeroplanes.

The Germans did not yet possess successful bomb-dropping machines, and their flights over the troops did no harm. Neither were they armed with machine guns, and air fighting had not started. Any aerial combats that took place were fought out, as one might say, with cold steel, by charging the enemy aeroplane direct. Naturally such events were very few, and I only know of one airman, Lieutenant Nesteroff, who met his death by charging the enemy in this way. He destroyed his foe, but fell a victim to his imprudently valiant act. This was the Lieutenant Nesteroff who was the first airman in the world to "loop the loop" in the air. He did this feat on his unstable machine at the Kieff Aerodrome. I must add that he was forbidden to make any further such experiments by his seniors, who said that if he had a strong desire to break his neck, it did not give him the right to destroy Government property, especially aeroplanes, in which at that time there was a great shortage. Following his initiative in making this "loop in the air," the performance was popularised by the French aviator Pegoud and others.

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The correspondence seized by my troops at the post office in Marggrabowa gave some extremely useful information to General Rennenkampf's staff. We learnt from it de-

tails as to how the enemy forces were grouped in East Prussia and a good many of their preliminary intentions, which knowledge proved of inestimable value in the early days of the fighting.

A vast difference was now noticed in the methods of getting news used both by ourselves and by the Germans. From the first days of the campaign it was clear to us that the Germans were employing every conceivable method of obtaining information. In our territory we discovered people who were giving the Germans news of what was taking place on our front and in our rear. When we invaded German territory, we soon found that the enemy was employing the local inhabitants, especially boys of school age, who, using cycles, appeared in front and to the sides of our moving units. At first we paid no attention to them, until circumstances clearly showed the reasons for such cycle rides. We had to order these young cyclists to be fired on. Thereafter they showed themselves much less frequently. Their method of transmitting information by fires I have already mentioned. Several times we caught German soldiers dressed as peasants, and even as women. Discovered by the Government underclothing they wore, they readily confessed the reason for their using peasants' clothes. However, many of these disguised soldiers probably were never caught. The Germans obtained more help from the women, to whom, of course, we had to behave with greater deference, because a clear proof of their implication in espionage was much more difficult to find. Evidently all the frontier districts of the East of Prussia were covered by a close net of what one may call watch towers. These towers were triangular wooden buildings, similar to miniature Eiffel towers. They were generally situated on hills, giving a splendid view of surrounding country. Many were

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built in the woods, where without them observation was impossible. Of course they did us a good deal of service also, but they were of more advantage to the enemy. Whenever we could find no use for them, we destroyed them. What gave us a great deal of trouble in finding out our position in unknown places was the complete absence of the local inhabitants. Scouting inquiries through persons knowing the country could not therefore be made. Our position would have been much more difficult if we had not found a large number of road signposts at cross roads and near inhabited points, showing the directions and distances of towns and villages in kilometres. Eventually as time went on, the Germans realised how great a help these signposts gave us, and when we invaded East Prussia the second time they were either entirely removed or, what was worse, were turned round, thus giving false directions. Our maps of East Prussia were exact copies from the German maps and therefore all the names were in Latin letters. But it was astonishing to find how intelligently our reconnoitring parties used the maps when scouting without officers.

In general, our first move into East Prussia convinced us how thoroughly the Germans had prepared for war; they had thought everything out, had foreseen everything, and had made a large expenditure on the preparations.

I endeavoured to ascertain what the different commanders thought of it all. The general impression was that the Germans were doing everything in their power to retain the initiative and were aiming at offensive tactics. They showed a certain impetuosity, and one could notice the personal initiative, not only of the smaller units, but even of small bodies of infantry, even when they were without officers. On the other hand, in defensive open fighting they did not distinguish themselves by any extraordinary tenacity of purpose, and when they began to retire after a battle their power of resistance dwindled to vanishing point. At that period of the war we did not feel our lack of artillery to any appreciable extent, although it was obvious that the Germans possessed great superiority in guns of all descriptions, particularly in howitzers and heavy guns. Our artillery of these classes was almost non-existent. The Germans were able to furnish even their cavalry units with heavy artillery of some kind and used their ammunition without regard for the future. In the course of events this lavish expenditure of shells caused a shortage; during 1914 we found instructions from their High Command ordering them to be sparing in the use of all artillery ammunition.

Notwithstanding strong resistance by the enemy, our troops, fighting nearly every day, continued to advance and shortly afterwards occupied the town of Insterburg, to which General Rennenkampf transferred his Army Headquarters. Here Rennenkampf's army began to feel the lack of organisation in the rear; the provisioning of the men became a great difficulty. In this respect, however, our plight was in no way comparable to the Germans'. Still, the enemy was able to utilise the vast network of normal and narrow-gauge railways for the defence of the country, as well as for the invasion of our territory. Moreover, he was able

to use the country roads for his mechanical transport. At this stage we had practically no transport of this character. When my cavalry came into contact with the Germans they could always see following the enemy long columns of motor-transport of all types filled with troops. Another great advantage the enemy had lay in the telegraph and telephone systems; those in East Prussia had been destroyed during the retreat, and it was only after careful repair that we could make use of them. Of still less advantage to us were the paved roads, for we possessed neither light nor heavy motor transport. When the transport officer of my division succeeded in obtaining three heavy motor-waggons, the neighbouring infantry staffs became very jealous of me. Without this transport I should never have been able to cover the fifty kilometres I travelled nearly every day during the time I was charged with the protection of the flank of the 1st Army. Luckily, there was no shortage of food and fodder in the country, an astonishing amount of rural wealth being revealed as we passed through. There were localities where German troops, and our own, passed five or six times, taking toll of the country on each occasion, and yet during our second campaign in East Prussia in the late autumn of 1914 we found remaining enormous reserves of food for both horses and men, although all the armies who passed used the food with a total disregard of the future. I was greatly impressed by the extremely high standard of scientific agriculture throughout the whole of East Prussia. Not only were the people most solicitous as to the cultivation of their farms, but their Government undoubtedly afforded them every assistance.

Evidently only these radical Government measures could explain the fact that in all the provinces of East Prussia through which we passed all the horned cattle was of a

Dutch breed, a black-and-white beast which the Germans had probably decided was the best for that country. Another point which impressed us all greatly was the richness of the farms and their strange similarity of build. All the farmhouses consisted of several stone buildings, one of which would be occupied and the others for rural economy purposes; all were surrounded by high stone walls. Those farms appeared like small fortifications and they often played an extremely important part during our fighting with the Germans. Unfortunately it was the Germans who found them the most profitable. Our field artillery was comparatively innocuous against the thick walls, whilst when we were in occupation of one of these temporary blockhouses the heavy howitzer shells of the enemy, which our troops christened "Trunks," played havoc with us, a number of our men receiving wounds from splinters of stones.

I have already mentioned that during the time we were advancing through East Prussia practically all the German inhabitants had fled to the interior of the country. The country people carried away most of their belongings on their farm vehicles and only left behind their cattle and poultry. The people in the towns were, of course, able to use the railways and fled in thousands to the interior. At the beginning of our first campaign in East Prussia we witnessed the departure of the country folk, whereas on the frontier, towns retained all their inhabitants. This proved that our advance was quite unexpected by the Germans, but towards the end of the first invasion and more especially at the commencement of the second, Eastern Prussia was deserted. People had fled from the towns. All the able-bodied inhabitants had gone westward and we were able to wander at will amongst their villages. In the towns

a few of the more courageous people remained; perhaps they did not altogether believe the fearsome tales which were running like wildfire throughout Germany as to the havoc our troops were making.

A characteristic episode happened in the town of Angerburg, which we had reached after a fifty-kilometre march in the days when motor-lorries had not been provided to bring up the supply of rations for the men. We arrived at Angerburg at nightfall, the town having been evacuated by the Germans only a few hours before. My officers reported to me that they had no bread for their men, and that the supply of sugar, tea, and salt had dwindled to vanishing point. I issued an order to investigate matters in the local bakers' shops, but these proved to be closed and deserted by their owners. There were no municipal authorities in the town. In the streets solitary citizens strolled about watching with curious eyes the Russian troops who were resting. I gave an order to ring the alarm bell at the steeple and to make it known to the citizens that they had all to meet in the market square. Little by little a small number of people collected, mostly old men and women, some 300 altogether. Addressing them I asked them to point out to me someone who could assume the functions of mayor and act as an intermediary between myself and the citizens. Amidst a babel of voices a name was called out and a man came, or was rather pushed, through the crowd. He was, I afterwards learnt, the owner of a provision shop. Then, in the presence of the crowd, I told him what my requirements were — namely, that the citizens should set to work immediately in all the bakers' shops of the town, appointing to each shop sufficient women to bake the bread. It had already been reported to me that there was plenty of flour in the shops. On the following morning this

bread, sufficient for two days' supply, had to be furnished for my cavalry division, which was then about 4,000 strong, together with a quantity of sugar, tea, salt, and tobacco. While I was explaining this to the newly elected Burgomaster it was pretty evident that he was not at all anxious to assist, every possible excuse being urged against supplying us.

Our next trouble was with motor-cars. Remembering an incident at Marggrabowa when a German car with the Red Cross made a pretence of wishing to pick up the wounded and then, when the roads suddenly became clear, dashed off to the west, I decided to take no risks at Angerburg, my staff having reported to me that they had seen a car in the town which might be utilised. So, again addressing the crowd, I said that as motor-cars were used for military purposes I required the citizens present to inform me at once where all the motor-cars were situated, because, doubtless, they would know where they were kept. I added, moreover, that it was not a joke, and if the information was not given conscientiously I would issue an order to shoot the inhabitants of a house where a car was found, or, in the absence of them, would shoot the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses. I gave the order in such a manner as to show it was not to be disregarded, and I realised that if the inhabitants should understand that it was not a mere threat I should never have to fulfil it. The impression it made surpassed my fondest hopes. First of all there were a few voices from the crowd from people offering to guide us to where there were cars, information which on verification proved to be perfectly accurate, although, unfortunately, none of these cars could be used, all that was useful being a number of spare parts. But my threat of shooting made the new Burgomaster suddenly come to the conclusion that

all of my requests could now be fulfilled. Volunteers came forward to commence the baking, and by the following morning all my requisitions had been carried out to the letter, the supplies being sufficient to carry us over a few days.

If the evacuation of Eastern Prussia gave us a good deal of trouble, one could only say that for Germany the consequences were infinitely more serious. Fugitives left for the inland towns by the thousand, spreading as they went exaggerated statements as to the cruelties alleged to have been practised by our troops. Our Cossacks in particular were the cause of many a wild rumour of alleged atrocities on the people, rumours, I need hardly say, which lost nothing in the telling, and created panic in the German towns. Although it is difficult to say to what extent, these stories, which were current all over Germany, could not but exert an influence on the German military authorities, who were being pressed on all sides to try to check our invasion of Eastern Prussia. At that time this could only have been accomplished by a large transfer of troops from the Western Front, and this the Germans were possibly reluctant to do. When, however, General Samsonoff's army commenced serious military operations, the German High Command realised that all Eastern Prussia and the defensive lines of the Masurian Lakes were likely to pass into our possession. Such an event, in the eyes of the Germans, could hardly fail to be regarded as one of great importance and likely to have a great effect on the ultimate issue of the campaign, for it must not be forgotten that at this time they were still of the opinion that the war would last but a few months. Had this not been the case, they would doubtless have preferred first of all to achieve a substantial success on the French front, even at the cost of a temporary failure in Eastern Prussia. However, the Germans finally

decided to strengthen their Eastern front at the cost of the other, a decision which had an enormous influence on the future of the whole war. This shows once more that in every affair, and especially in military operations, it is dangerous to abandon a decision already taken, even if changing the plan promises a temporary success.

CHAPTER V

CAVALRY OPERATIONS AND SOME CHARACTERISTIC INCIDENTS

WHILE General Rennenkampf, prompted no doubt by his natural boldness, was energetically advancing towards the west and menacing the German fortress of Konigsberg without waiting for his rear lines to be organised, the formation of General Samsonoff's army was being completed and disposed near the northern frontier of the Polish kingdom, with its front directed towards the north. The country between these two army groups had to be filled in later on by the 10th Army which now was just beginning formation. During the interval the 100 intervening kilometres were occupied by weak and widely extended cavalry units.

Before describing the development of military activities, it is interesting to review briefly the part played by our cavalry in the first days of the campaign. During this period they had been obliged to carry out every method of fighting assigned to them by textbooks on tactics and strategy, most onerous of these duties being endless work of reconnaissance which entailed very heavy responsibility on the mounted arms. Every day our cavalry had to throw out a network of patrols, varying in strength from ten men to an entire squadron. Of no less importance was the work of protecting the flanks of the army. At this stage our armies were, with few exceptions, grouped separately, so that their flanks were never safe from a turning movement by the enemy's infantry and cavalry, and it was only the

timely intervention of our own cavalry which could guard against such a contingency. It was the cavalry also which had to maintain contact between the different armies and at the same time keep a constant watch over the intervening country. And independently the cavalry had to fight off the numerous surprise attacks which the Germans were fond of making on our rear, some of these being on quite a large scale. In moving through the country we were occupying, we naturally destroyed all railway lines and buildings. We found that most of the substantial buildings and bridges were strongly held by the Germans and to attack them required a considerably larger force than we had available for this purpose. The Germans, on the other hand, with their splendid railway system were able at any time to bring up train loads of reinforcements to meet strategic contingencies.

To people not intimately acquainted with military operations and the conditions under which modern war is waged, it may possibly appear incomprehensible that the so-called "line strategy" is again being used in the twentieth century, a strategy that has been so severely criticised by all the great military leaders. There is but one answer to such a question — namely, the influence railways have on strategical operations. Until railways were widely used, armies were tied down very closely to their lines of communication. The transference or institution of new lines of communication in those times was a process as complicated as it was slow, and had to precede to a certain degree the concentration of troops in any given direction. Therefore it was impossible to conceal such an operation from either secret or open agents of the enemy. It is another matter nowadays. Let us suppose that one of the belligerents has collected its armed forces into several groups and left the spaces between

these groups without observation or occupation by cavalry, or territorial units, and further that these spaces may be of 100 versts or more in extent. Naturally, an enterprising opponent would take advantage of these spaces to penetrate, not only within his enemy's lines, but also to establish a profitable base for making a blow on the flanks of one of the enemy groups. A quick concentration of, say, an army corps, could be effected by railroads leading to these unoccupied areas. If it is taken into consideration that an area on the European frontiers of 100 kilometres or more is fed generally by several railroads, then it is quite clear that the enterprising enemy can quickly concentrate against such a point a whole army.

If, however, in the beginning of the campaign neither side can at once place its entire strength in the field, the task of occupying or covering these unoccupied areas must fall upon the cavalry as the most mobile branch of an army. Their duty would be to prevent the concentration of the enemy until such time as their own infantry was prepared to attack in force.

On this account the cavalry was indispensable to the Russian Army, which had to deploy on a front of nearly 1,300 kilometres. One can only regret that at the beginning of the campaign the considerable forces of Russian horsemen, which were formed from the second and third mobilisations of Cossacks, could not be brought up to our frontiers because the comparatively poor railroad system was entirely occupied in transferring troops and war materials to our western frontier, and at the same time bringing up mobilised reserves and new rear-guard formations. Therefore, it can probably be supposed that future wars, at the beginning, will develop on the principles and laws of wide field tactics, but with the time when all the fighting

forces shall be brought into the field both belligerents will use position, trench, and line tactics where the flanks of the opponents are secured by the seas or a neutral territory.

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During the war of movement in East Prussia our cavalry did some magnificent work, their reconnoitring and patrol activities on the flanks of the armies keeping the Germans in a state of constant perturbation which must have been far from pleasant.

When my division captured the railways which surrounded Körschen I sent Cornet Bolderoff of the first regiment of Don Cossacks on a reconnoitring patrol in some of the lonelier districts where I suspected the presence of the enemy. This suspicion proved to be well founded. One day Cornet Bolderoff came across a German column moving forward in a direction which would directly menace my rear and might have proved a grave danger to the infantry on the flanks of the 1st Army.

Leaving his patrol hidden in the woods, Bolderoff, accompanied by a few dismounted Cossacks, waded through the marshy woods which surrounded the macadamised roads along which the German troops could be seen marching. There he remained for hours, crouching low behind the bushes, hardly daring to breathe, while he took careful count of the infantry, artillery, and heavy transport, which took hours to go by. These numbers he communicated to his men lying a short distance behind, who sent them on to us, and when twilight had gone and the German column had disappeared, rejoined his patrol and galloped to my staff headquarters with the news. For this gallant exploit Bolderoff was decorated with the Cross of St. George; he was the first officer in the division to be so honoured; apart from those who had been killed, or had died from wounds.

Another exploit, if anything still more brilliant, took place close to the Augustoff Canal in September 1914, and had the effect of nullifying a German project to force our lines near the River Nieman, in the neighbourhood of Druskeniki. I had sent out Cornet Ivanoff in command of a patrol of Soumsky Hussars to ascertain the strength of the Germans who would have to cross a thickly wooded country before they could attack the left bank of the Nieman. In moving through the forest Ivanoff's patrols discovered a German column and informed their commander, who, before taking cover in the thick undergrowth, sent off two men to divisional headquarters with the news and then lay flat for hours watching the Germans, listening to their talk and taking careful note of the numbers. While on the way to headquarters, however, the two messengers came across another German column marching along a road between the first body and the Augustoff Canal. The presence of this second column at this point made it impossible for our two messengers to get through. Accordingly one of the hussars remained to watch the enemy force while the other returned to inform Cornet Ivanoff of the position. Ivanoff detailed an intelligent non-commissioned officer to watch the second German column, with instructions to go straight to headquarters when the opportunity presented itself.

During the evening I received both reports, and as they indicated a graver menace to the First than to the Tenth Army, to which I then belonged, I sent full details on to General Rennenkampf and also communicated with the staffs of both armies by wireless. Especially important was Ivanoff's information that a certain number of platoons were carrying their banners, showing that the main body of the regiment had gone on ahead. Ivanoff also gave particu-

lars of the light and heavy artillery with the Germans. I had no opportunity of ascertaining to what extent this valuable information was utilised, but, at any rate, General Rennenkampf took such measures that the Germans failed to force the Nieman, and two days later made a precipitate retirement.

As an example of the lucky capture of an important railway junction with comparatively little fighting, the taking of Körschen, described in military geographical handbooks as one of the most vital railway junctions in East Prussia, is worth mentioning. Apparently the appearance of Russian cavalry in the neighbourhood was quite unexpected, for the junction was held only by a weak body of the Landsturm. Our capture of this junction did not enter into the enemy's calculations, for shortly afterwards he brought up strong reinforcements of cavalry and infantry, together with companies of cyclists and heavy motor transport. Körschen changed hands a good deal subsequently, although the Germans were not able to use the railways again. We had destroyed all the station buildings and permanent way in the vicinity, and when, in the early days of September 1914, General Rennenkampf was obliged to begin a retiring movement to our frontier, my retreating horse-patrols set fire to the important stocks of coal which had been collected at the junction; the Germans were unable to subdue the outbreak owing to the destruction of the water-pipes. The capture of Körschen cost the Petrograd Lancers several of their officers, including Captain Makedonsky, who fought in the Japanese War and greatly distinguished himself at the taking of Marggrabowa.

The work of securing the flanks of the army, not only by reconnaissance, but by fighting, was characteristically used in the first days of the retreat of General Rennen-

kampf's army from East Prussia. Soon after the return of my division, after an attack on the town of Allenstein, which I will describe later in more detail, an order was issued to detach my division from the First Army and to include it in the newly formed Tenth Army. This army had to occupy the country between the army of Rennenkampf and the former army of Samsonoff, and partly to replace the army which after the unlucky battle of Tannenberg Woods lost nearly half its strength.

In obedience to Rennenkampf's orders and having received my instructions from General Ratkewitch, who temporarily commanded the 10th Army, which orders were later confirmed by General Pflug, I moved in the rear of our infantry in the direction of Marggrabowa, which lay outside the sphere of the attack of Rennenkampf and Samsonoff. From that point I intended to move on to the left flank of the 10th Army, which then did not possess sufficient cavalry for conducting reconnaissances on its left. The town of Graevo was fixed as my point of concentration, and to reach it I had to conduct a series of forced marches. When I arrived on the left flank of the 2nd Corps of the 1st Army I ascertained from the Corps Commander that the Germans were moving and that no forces were available to intercept the movement. General Rennenkampf had promised a division of infantry, which, however, could not arrive for at least two days, and would, on arrival, be posted behind the left flank of a place called the " Rothe Bude." Night had fallen, and the last information brought to us revealed the fact that considerable German forces had occupied the small German town of Widmennen to the east of Lötzen, which had already played an important part in the defence of the gates to the Masurian Lakes. Out of these gates there had now appeared a German column apparently with the inten-

tion of turning Rennenkampf's left flank. I was thus between two fires; I had either to follow exactly the orders I had been given by the commanders of both armies, or, on my own initiative, and despite orders, to move forward on the flanks of the 2nd Corps and sustain the first blow of the German column until the promised assistance arrived. When this infantry did arrive I should have at once retired, for in fighting strength my cavalry could not compare with an infantry division.

I did not hesitate as to the course I should take. Strong bodies of cavalry were sent to capture the necks between the lakes to the east of Widmennen, so far occupied only by weak German patrols. Simultaneously I rode off to choose a position, close to the isthmuses, near the Lake of Kruglanken, which was comparatively easy to defend with small bodies of troops. My division at this time consisted of four regiments, the Moscow Lancers having returned to me from the 4th Corps.

I informed the commander of the two armies of my intention to disregard my orders to advance on Graevo. Next morning, while the battle for the possession of the aforementioned necks was in progress, I received a second order from the commander of the 10th Army to make all haste with my arrival to enable him to complete his formation. I could not understand, however, whether this was in answer to my communication about having been delayed for more than twenty-four hours to protect the flank of the 1st Army or whether my dispatch and his order had crossed each other. In any case it was too late; even had I wished it I could not have withdrawn my troops before nightfall and after that it was imperative that they should have a night's rest. During the night the promised infantry reinforcements were due and there was every possibility that they

could be disposed so as to protect the left flank of the 2nd Corps. The belief, which I shared with the commander of this corps, that the Germans had the intention of turning his left flank, turned out to be well founded.

Early the following day the Germans bombarded the necks occupied by my dismounted dragoons. My two horse batteries, which had just taken up position, immediately answered the fire, and so attracted most of the enemy's heavy artillery. The Germans were under the delusion that their batteries were on the slope of a small hill covered with bushes, and they literally ploughed up the ground for some distance around until the green field became black.

Shortly after noon, German infantry appeared before the dragoons and began to attack in long waves. They did not appear to relish their task and made but little headway against our artillery fire and the rifle fire of the dismounted dragoons. It was difficult to explain this hesitation of the Germans, as the total force did not amount to more than two and a half battalions of infantry. Probably the Germans thought we were occupying the necks in force. Until the evening I was not obliged to strengthen my front line. I had to be particularly economical in the use of my reserves, for I had received information that while the enemy was attacking on my front his cavalry had been noticed moving in a southern direction with the intention of either turning my flank or taking me in the rear. Luckily this cavalry could move no faster than an infantry column as the German cavalry had attached to it a Jaeger battalion which hampered mobility. In some cases the Germans tried to counterbalance this defect by the presence of cyclist companies or by putting their infantry in heavy motor-waggons. The slowness of the enemy's movements naturally assisted me greatly, for it would have been impossible with my weak-

ened forces to have fought an engagement with the German infantry advancing on my front and at the same time to have repelled an attack in the rear. In the rear the sparseness of my force would soon have become apparent, with results that could only have proved disastrous. In any case, the German infantry were very slow to attack, probably because they were expecting something from their cavalry in the rear. For some time I managed to detain this cavalry column on the neck of a lake by a squadron which I sent there for the purpose. In this engagement, when our dragoons were mounting their horses preparatory to retreat, one of their young officers, Prince Ouroussof, was killed. From the beginning of the war Prince Ouroussof had tried to join the army for active service, but for some unknown reason his appointment was kept back. It was therefore something of an irony of fate that he should have been killed in his first battle — he joined his regiment only the evening before. I have often noticed, not only in this war, that men who surmount apparently insuperable obstacles so that they may serve in the army usually die the death of a hero in their first battle but after a deed that exceeds ordinary bravery.

With the approach of dusk, little by little the fighting ceased. In those days the Germans did not carry out operations at night, so that sometimes we were able to take a much-needed rest. All that disturbed the stillness of the night was the sound of a German armoured car which would rush up to our barricades on the macadamised roads, fire a few rounds from a small gun, and then scuttle off into the darkness. Probably they were searching for our bivouacs, but they rarely succeeded in doing any damage. During the night I quartered my troops in a village close by, leaving strong bodies to guard against any attempt to

rush the necks of the lakes. I could not at the time decide what to do next day. During the night it became clear that the 2nd Army Corps had received orders to begin its retreat to the Russian frontier, a distance of about thirty-six hours' march. Considering that I had achieved my object in securing the left flank of the army and compelled the German cavalry to make a wide detour, I came to the conclusion that it was time for me to carry out my original orders and join the 10th Army. No countermanding orders had been received, and I thought this was by far the wiser plan, for I had received information that the left flank of the retreating army was now perfectly safe, the 2nd Cavalry Division of the Guards having been entrusted with that task.

Communicating my decision to Rennenkampf and Pflug, who was now commanding the 10th Army, I decided to move off in the direction of Graevo. I should have liked to visit Marggrabowa again, where we had fought in the first days of the war, but could not find the time, although my heavy transport passed through. The officer in charge afterwards told me the town was perfectly peaceful; all the shops were trading, and he himself, in the course of an hour's rest, had drunk some excellent coffee with different German *kuchen* in some of the local cafés. None of the inhabitants suspected that German troops would enter the town again during the war, and had quite settled down to Russian rule. Even less did they imagine that Marggrabowa would become the scene of some of the heaviest fighting of the campaign.

The inhabitants evidently did not suspect the near approach of the German troops, who only stayed long enough to make a battle area of the town, and to spoil it considerably, destroying its peaceful life, and causing its shops to be looted by both the Russian and German soldiery.

It was in this half-destroyed state, full of our troops and rear institutions and transports, that I found it in the first days of November 1914 when I had left the command of the mixed Cavalry Corps. I was journeying to take over the command of the 6th Army Corps and *en route* called on the 10th Army Staff, whose chief was then General Sivers and whose headquarters were on the outskirts of the town.

CHAPTER VI

OUR DASH THROUGH THE GERMAN LINES

WITHOUT doubt the most characteristic episode in the first months of the war performed by the troops under my command, was their dash through the German lines to Allenstein from the line Angersburg-Lindenhof. This operation was carried out on the basis of instructions from the Commander-in-Chief, Gilinsky, to General Rennenkampf. My instructions from General Rennenkampf were that the Cavalry Divisions were to penetrate the enemy's position and even approach Allenstein by a concentric movement from the front occupied by Rennenkampf's Army, to find out and get evidence of the condition and whereabouts of Samsonoff's Army, news of which for two days had not been received by General Gilinsky's Staff.

A copy of this order was delivered me by Captain Malevanoff, who arrived at 3 p.m. on (August 29th) in a motor-car, just as I sat down to lunch with my Staff, having given my troops orders to have a complete rest that day.

I handed these instructions after perusal to my Chief-of-Staff, who wonderingly asked me what I intended to do, and how I proposed to execute such an order. The day before, my troops had had a comparatively prolonged engagement with the German cavalry, supported by infantry, and on the following day reconnaissance had established the fact that all the populated territory towards the enemy was occupied by German troops. This meant that to

get to Allenstein it would be necessary to cut our way through territory in the enemy's hands.

Answering my Chief-of-Staff, I stated that our division consisting of three regiments of cavalry and one battery of mounted artillery should move out from bivouac at midnight. The route to be taken would be announced when the division was assembled and ready to move.

While the Chief-of-Staff was making the necessary arrangements, I took the opportunity to inquire from the Staff Captain, Malevanoff, if he could enlighten me as to what was the motive of such an extraordinary order, and what reason could be given for it. I could not get a satisfactory reply; all that he could tell me was that for several days no information whatever had been received from Samsonoff's Army by Rennenkampf's Staff. According to the last information the Staff had, Samsonoff had moved forward so as to turn round the Masurian Lakes front. The first news of the commencement of this movement was rather favourable than otherwise, but following the receipt of this information there had been complete interruption of all communication with General Samsonoff's Staff. It was evident that the Commander-in-Chief, taking advantage of the considerable strength in cavalry with Rennenkampf's Army, wished to re-establish touch with Samsonoff, and had resolved not to get in touch by the route previously used, but through enemy territory.

It was apparent from a careful study of the map, that to penetrate to the Allenstein region where Samsonoff's Army was supposed to be, it would be necessary to cover over fifty kilometres of enemy territory, taking the shortest route, and several railways would have to be crossed *en route;* and as the Germans always guarded all railways more or less closely, it meant that we could not count on

the movements of a cavalry column several thousand strong remaining undiscovered by the Germans. The only chance of success for such an enterprise lay in a sudden penetration of the German lines, taking advantage of the night, which happily at this time was moonless, and of speed. Small patrols were immediately sent to find out which route gave us the best chances of concealment under cover of darkness. About midnight the division, with the Petrograd Lancer Regiment as advance guard, moved off through the German lines, happily without a shot being fired at them; their success was largely due to the fact that they travelled by a small road through a wood which, for some reason or other, the enemy was not guarding.

By dawn the division had already passed the zone occupied by German troops, and about 6 a.m. had their first brush with enemy infantry guarding the railroad.

I have already mentioned that the Petrograd Lancers were the advance guard. At that time I was unaware of the superstitious belief in the division that whenever lancers were the advance guard, there would be heavy fighting with the enemy. This belief was substantiated by the fact that the lancers, compared with other regiments, had had the heaviest losses, especially amongst the officers, and more particularly in advance-guard fighting. As will be seen further, this belief was confirmed on this day. Throughout the entire war this regiment distinguished itself brilliantly, its bravery being famous throughout the army.

In every case of a division advancing, regiments for advance guard invariably had to take this duty in turn. I was extremely grateful to chance that this duty-turn fell to this lancer regiment, as, with the utmost confidence, I could leave the most difficult and responsible operations for them to carry out.

To cross the first railway line as quickly as possible it was necessary to engage the German railway guards with about half a dozen squadrons, as there was no certainty that this movement through their lines had not been noticed, and that they would not undertake some movements against my rear, especially as they might understand what was taking place by the rifle fire at the railway. The division took about an hour in crossing the railway, from which point they went forward at an increased pace direct to Allenstein. I had not the slightest information about the enemy in this district, as it was remote from our base of operations. The crossing of the second railway was attended by about the same amount of resistance. Just about noon an officers' patrol sent out from the cavalry division, which was moving towards Allenstein from the north to get in touch with us, came in. The officer told me that they reckoned that the cavalry division could soon get to Allenstein. This knowledge raised our confidence. We pushed on to the railway which separated us from Allenstein and was not far distant from the town itself (a railway junction). *En route* my troops found a machine gun in perfect order, which turned out to be of Russian make, showing clearly that Russian troops had been in action there.

As we approached the railway, we sent out parties under officers to blow up the railway line to prevent the Germans bringing up reserves. This measure, taken in time, was of inestimable value to us, although the explosions must have drawn the enemy's attention, but a column of cavalry with a front of over two versts must have drawn his attention in any case.

The reason that we had passed through this zone unnoticed was that the Germans had evacuated the inhabitants earlier. Soon after noon our advanced guard exchanged

shots with the enemy, the firing becoming more and more intense. Riding at the head of my column, I could see the dismounted lancers advancing and, retreating before them, the comparatively weaker German infantry in extended order. In the distance the buildings and the barracks in Allenstein could be seen with the naked eye. Our battery was called up and immediately opened fire on the German reserves, and also on the retreating line. Information was brought in that several German dead had been found, and it was gathered from the equipment of these men that we were fighting infantry. A German battery, evidently of howitzers, opened fire and shortly afterwards another joined in, both paying special attention to our battery. The battle front was gradually extending, and I found it necessary to throw in a regiment of hussars and some machine guns. The Cossacks were detailed to the flanks. Information came from our patrol guards that a train, evidently filled with troops, was stopped by the destruction of part of the railways, and was trying to retire. This move, however, did not prevent the debarkation of troops at some other point, and a march by them against our flanks and an enveloping of our rear. At the same time the Germans who had been retreating in extended order before our lancers were reinforced, and every minute we expected them to make a counter-attack. At any rate, it was to be supposed that the methodical German was awaiting the result of the enveloping manœuvre of the column sent by train, and by other troops which so far we had not discovered. The body of Pankratieff, one of the colonels of the lancers, at this moment was carried past me on a Red Cross cart, and soon afterwards the commander of the First Lancer Squadron was also killed.

It was clear by the development of the battle that with

a comparatively weaker force — I had barely more than 1,500 dismounted rifles, made up of various cavalry units — I should not be able to force my way through to Allenstein.

When the answering cannonade was heard at the commencement of the battle, it came into my mind that this might be our cavalry division attacking from the north; I even stopped our firing to make sure. However, my artillerymen soon discerned from the nature of the explosions that it was German firing.

Neither in this way nor by the network of scouts could news be obtained of the approach of Russian cavalry who, according to calculation, should have been near.

Before commencing a retreat, I felt much inclined to fire several rounds from the artillery into Allenstein, but as I was not certain that whether any of the German Staff and troops were in the town, I did not do so, particularly when I remembered that the peaceful civilian inhabitants might still be in occupation of their homes.

About 3 p.m., having travelled more than fifty kilometres according to the map, having fought several small engagements at the railways, and a more serious fight before the town of Allenstein itself, and not having seen any signs at all of Russian troops, and having distinguished part of the German troops with which we had been engaged outside Allenstein, I felt that I had done all that was possible for my force. Under the circumstances, I felt it my duty to lead the troops out of battle, and to find a way to our main forces, the most difficult part of our problem. I was also faced with the necessity of breaking off the battle so that both men and horses might have rest and food, as they had been in the saddle and without food for the whole day.

Unavoidably, the first part of the retreat had to be ef-

fected along the same route as the advance, that being the shortest and best known.

Later, I decided that perhaps under the cover of darkness I would change the route and in this way outwit the Germans who, without doubt, had already taken steps to intercept the division on its way back to our main force. Of course there might still be a possibility of advancing to join up with Samsonoff's Army, which had been in the neighbourhood of Allenstein, but as the direction taken by him could not be ascertained, such an advance would be a matter of guesswork.

Fortunately, the German troops travelling by train met by the explosions when we destroyed the line, and by the firing of our scouts, instead of detraining returned to their starting-point. This gave me the chance to withdraw all the regiments from the fight, and, having left a rear-guard of several hussar squadrons with machine guns to follow us immediately, to begin my retreat.

Our horses were so fresh that over the first few kilometres we went at a smart trot. I placed General Niloff — the brother of the Admiral who was always in attendance to the late Emperor — at the head of the column and myself accompanied the rear. By 6 p.m. we had traversed a considerable part of our road, and as it was nearly dusk I decided to give the men a rest and the horses food. Seeing an isolated farm on one side, I ordered the column to turn in that direction, to send out small guarding detachments all round the place, and to feed the horses without unsaddling or unlimbering the guns. The farm was completely deserted; the barns crammed full of forage. The living houses showed signs of recent occupation; food was in course of preparation. Less than a quarter of an hour after our arrival, I was informed that while the soldiers

were taking hay from the loft they found two German women, who were the owners of the farm, deeply imbedded in the hay. They were at first very tearful, but when they were told that everything taken by the officers would be paid for, and that for all requisitioned forage a receipt would be given them, they became calmer and commenced preparing food for us. We had had nothing for twenty-four hours, and the unrecognisable but very tasty German food proved very acceptable to us. With the approach of darkness, about 8 p.m., both women were caught trying to get over the fence to escape. This manœuvre on their part was not seriously enough considered. Nevertheless I gave orders for them to be watched. Having learned from the chiefs of the various units the tired condition of our force, I determined to give the horses a prolonged rest as we had still thirty to forty kilometres to cover. I had to choose a more circuitous route, out of range of possible fights at the railway crossings, and such points, before we came into direct communication with our main army.

We had given the instructions for bivouacking, and possibly the majority had already fallen asleep, when I was awakened and told that both the German women had disappeared in the darkness, and all search for them had been in vain. The only conclusion I could come to was that their disappearance, before they had received either money or receipts for food and forage, could only be for the purpose of alarming the local authorities, who would telephone for help to the German forces. We had not, I may here interpose, been able to cut all the telephone and telegraph wires. All my unit commanders and especially the chief of the artillery asked me to move off not later than 11 p.m., though the troops and the artillery were very exhausted. Weighing all the pros and cons of the women's escape, I

GENERAL AIDE-DE-CAMP SAMSONOFF, COMMANDER OF THE SECOND ARMY

GENERAL AIDE-DE-CAMP RENNENKAMPF, COMMANDER OF THE FIRST ARMY

decided to accede to their request. The women deceived us by speaking Polish, not very fluently it is true, and by pretending to have sympathy with us. Nevertheless, it seemed to me that the reasons for our moving off finally were indispensable.

At 11 p.m. the column moved off on the way we had come, and I again ordered the lancer regiment to form the advance guard. Owing to the darkness the lancers lost their way. This mishap only became known to Captain Novikoff of my Staff, riding at the head of the first squadron with the commander of the brigade, General Leoff, and the commander of the squadron, when they read the signs at the cross roads by electric flash lamps. Turning into the right way they did not realise that they had no outposts in front of them. This incident occurred in a village which seemed completely dead. Not a sound was to be heard; not a glimpse of light shone from any window. Arriving at the middle of the village, the riders in front were suddenly met by a point-blank volley from some ten rifles. The volley was fired so closely that Captain Shevtsoff was killed. He was the third commander of the third lancer squadron to be killed and had taken these duties at noon; he had previously been my personal orderly. He came from Moscow on his own initiative, and joined up in a rather irregular manner. Having been ordered to remain with the Military School, to get out of Moscow he got leave from the school, counting on being able to get his transfer back to his lancer regiment. He was killed before his transfer was received. A bullet struck the field glasses worn by one of the officers riding beside him; it was a lucky hit and saved the rider's life. General Leoff was thrown from his horse, which had been struck by a bullet on one of the brass bridle ornaments. The charger ran off into the darkness, and when General

Leoff recovered consciousness he thought it best to roll on one side and await developments.

Hearing this volley close at hand — at night sounds always seem nearer and more violent — I immediately gave orders for a chain of dismounted troops to clear the village if possible without firing. The line of men moved up and soon I was able to ride up to the spot where the volley had been fired. In the middle of the road lay Squadron Commander Shevtsoff's body. A few paces from the body, drawn across the road, was a large village cart, from which wires were stretched and fastened to the trees on the sides of the street. It was evident that an ambush formed of a small cavalry unit had been prepared for us. The soldiers riding immediately behind the officers of the ambushed squadron said that as soon as the volley was fired they heard the sound of galloping horses.

At this time I was told that General Leoff's horse had been found, but that he himself had not been seen. At first I thought he had been captured, perhaps wounded, during the first confusion, either by the Germans or by the local inhabitants who had locked him up somewhere in the village. I decided to give orders to have the place searched, however difficult it might be in the darkness, and notwithstanding the delay it would cause. However, before a report was brought to me that the whole village had been gone through, by the Cossacks and lancers, General Leoff walked up to us in person. He said that on falling from his horse he had deemed it best to take cover. Finally, he heard voices and the artillery wheels and decided to leave his hiding-place. The division was ordered to proceed on its way. About midday, without any particular incidents happening, no signs of German troops in the neighbourhood having been seen, I thought we were out of their reach, and

as I realised that in the past thirty-six hours my men had travelled more than 100 kilometres — without counting the engagements that had been fought — I decided to bivouac the whole division, so that they could have food and rest, even to allowing the horses to be unsaddled. Fortune was on our side again, for before this order could be carried out, first a non-commissioned officer reported, and then Cornet Tutcheff reported personally, that from a neighbouring hillock a chain of German infantry, about a regiment strong, could be seen hurriedly approaching, close enough to be seen even with the naked eye. The direction of this approach was from south to north — from which a deduction could be made that the Germans had waited for my return on the same route by which I had penetrated their lines. They had made a flank movement either to cut me off on my return or to make a flank attack.

The extreme weariness of my troops, especially of the artillery horses, made it impossible to give battle. The horses might not have had the strength to pull out the guns if we had to take up position in a ploughed field, for even when moving along the hard roads spare mounts had to be linked on, and those most tired unlinked; the troopers dismounted and drove them before us like cattle, so tired were they.

I gave orders for the column to move off towards the north-east so as to avoid a fight with an enemy so much stronger than we were and to endeavour to get into direct touch with our own forces. However, our rear-guard, the Hussar Regiment, was heavily fired on by rifles and artillery. I was obliged to leave the front of the column to one of the brigade commanders, and go to the rear, which was commanded by the Hussar Commander, Colonel Grotten. Afterwards we found out that our troops had moved

in an eastern direction on August 31st; this was why we found the Germans in possession. On taking up my place at the rear of our column, my troops discovered another chain of German cavalry and infantry, and as I was about to give orders to prepare for battle — to give the enemy as much as he gave — a deluge of rain fell and completely hid us from the enemy. By the time the rainfall ceased we had passed a small wood which screened us from the enemy's sight and firing. One and a half to two hours later we came up to our main army's outposts and felt that at last we were out of hostile territory after doing our utmost to carry out our orders.

Some days later I learnt that at dawn on the 17th (30th) a message from General Gilinsky had come in to the village from which we first started for Allenstein and where part of our ammunition carts had remained, countermanding the order given us. This was sent after me, but of course in the daylight the small patrol who bore it could not carry it through the German lines. The other cavalry divisions had received this new order and had not started. I recognise that we only managed to execute this "dash through" and get safely back by sheer luck.

It would be interesting to know, and perhaps the future will enlighten us, how the Germans accounted for the presence of a fairly large force with artillery deep within their lines.

It was found out later that at the time of the raid one of the German Army Staffs was in Allenstein, which makes me confess that I am sorry now that I prevented our artillery from firing a few rounds into the town. It would probably have been the first occasion on which the German Army Headquarters Staff had been directly under the fire of field artillery.

CHAPTER VII

THE BATTLE OF TANNENBERG

As I have already pointed out, General Rennenkampf decided to invade East Prussia without waiting for the complete organisation of his rear. What urged him to this decision was his desire first to take the initiative, and secondly to take advantage of the small number of German troops concentrated on the East Prussia frontier. In this way he hoped to upset the enemy's calculations.

General Samsonoff was then facing the East Prussian frontier, having finished the concentration and continuing the organisation of his rear, had pushed forward his cavalry, strengthened by small infantry units, over the frontier. There is no doubt that a big success might have been attained if Rennenkampf and Samsonoff had moved simultaneously. However, it is difficult to say definitely whether such a combined offensive could have been undertaken in the first days of the war. The Germans had a complete knowledge of our theatre of war close to East Prussia, and knew all the difficulties we had in bringing forward means for an advance in the early days of the campaign; that is why they did not expect an invasion. Possibly the moving forward of forces, as large as these, would have been most difficult in the first week of the campaign.

But one thing is certain, that if this advance had been put off, the Germans would not have had to regroup their armies nor have been forced to draw troops from France

for East Prussia. Further, they would have had to furnish much less ammunition and artillery for the East Front, both of which causes weakened them in the Marne battle which proved to be the turning-point of their operations in France. The Marne battle was lost to them because of their lack of fresh reserves and their shortage in artillery ammunition. One must not forget that the fighting in East Prussia used up not only large quantities of German shells, but caused them to increase their local ammunition reserves at the expense of their central stores.

General Rennenkampf's invasion, commencing in the first days in August, continued victoriously for about ten days, and then came to a stop from natural causes. Even if all Rennenkampf's transport and rear organisations had been completely ready and in a position to be of service to his troops, it would still have been necessary to stop the movement, as the greater part of his forces were so far from a railway base as to make transportation by horse almost impossible. The railroads in East Prussia had to be altered from narrow to broad gauge, an operation which was retarded because formations of workmen had not yet been prepared by the engineers. The Germans had removed nearly all the rolling stock to their rear. From the rolling stock captured we were only able to make up a few trains, the lack of locomotives especially hindering us. We expected rolling stock from Warsaw, where nearly everything was at a standstill. The only narrow gauge we had was the Warsaw–Vienna line with its branches to Alexandrova.

The reason for building the first Russian broad-gauge railway commenced in the 19th century was to prevent, or at any rate to make difficult, a German invasion, which could not have been undertaken without completely relaying the line.

In those days this decision was sound, for reconstructional work was much more slowly performed than now. At present with sufficient workmen and engineering staff such work can almost keep pace with an advancing field army, and in a war of trenches there is time to build completely new lines. Owing to our track being wider than theirs, the Germans in reconstructing the railways had to cut our sleepers to fit their own gauge, which in time necessitated us laying down a new set of sleepers, a much longer process.

Rennenkampf's successful advance and the daily increasing fighting and manœuvring powers of General Samsonoff's Army led to the decision that it should support the advance made by Rennenkampf's Army, by a thrust in a northerly direction. It seemed as if this must be successful, for Samsonoff's cavalry met no special difficulty and no serious opposition in German territory. It was decided that Samsonoff should advance with four army corps and several cavalry divisions, on a front of about thirty kilometres. The actual advance was to be organised with the 13th and 15th Army Corps in the centre, having the heads of their vanguard in line and in close contact with each other.

On the outside flanks of these central army corps, at a distance of about half a day's march from the flanks and marching slightly to the rear, were to be, on the right, the 6th Army Corps, and on the left the 1st Army Corps.

It was understood that the main attack was to be borne by the two central army corps, whilst those marching slightly to the rear on the flanks were to serve as protection from any possible envelopment; but in case of the central army corps being held up by battle, they could in their turn move ahead to get round the flanks of the enemy holding up the two central army corps.

The Battle of Tannenberg, as it afterwards became

known, took its name from a large wood behind the battlefield into which the two central corps were driven and surrounded by the Germans, the entire forces, with all their remaining officers, being captured. The plans which had been made, owing to tactical errors on the part of the corps commanders on the flanks, were never carried out, and the two corps in the centre, left entirely without support and surrounded by the living wall of the enemy, had no option but to lay down their arms after a heavy fight.

Fighting began on the morning of September 28th, and from the beginning the corps on the flanks met with some resistance, the Germans threatening an attack on their exterior, which was but poorly protected with cavalry. Probably this resistance was unexpected, for both corps, without half their troops having come into action, began to retire at the moment the two central corps were heavily engaged. On the front the battle had been going well for the Russian troops; a few thousand prisoners had been taken, and there was every possibility of a great victory. Things moved normally for some time afterwards and heavy losses had been incurred by both sides, when suddenly fresh German columns made their appearance, marching to strike a blow at both flanks of the Russian troops attacking in the northerly direction. It was reported at the same time that these enemy columns could turn both flanks of our forces, which, of course, would mean that both army corps would be encircled.

Headquarters of the central corps were entirely without information as to what had happened to the corps on the flanks. They were supposed to be holding in check any turning movement attempted by the Germans. In reality they were retreating and had altogether lost touch with the enemy. Probably it is quite natural to ask why General

Samsonoff did not give orders to compel the flanking corps to stop their retreat, to reattack and by a single frontal blow strike hard at the flank and rear of the German columns which were then beginning to surround the two corps in the centre. Failing this in any case he could have had given orders in due time to withdraw from a fight that was fast threatening to become unequal.

General Samsonoff and his Staff were at an observation post in company with General Martson, the commander of the 15th Corps, watching, within the limits of their visibility, the attack which was successfully developing before them. It was subsequently reported by eye-witnesses that during the battle Samsonoff several times inquired from General Martson if any information had been received from the corps on the flanks. Each time the answer was in the negative. The absence of news was due to the difficulty of maintaining connection in such open fighting and also to the fact that both the flanking corps were moving, and had the utmost difficulty in maintaining any kind of communication with the other commanders. Destitute of any information concerning the other troops under his control, Samsonoff lost all power of directing operations and thus infringed one of the elementary rules of military strategy, that which provides that the commander of an army shall choose as his headquarters some spot where information can readily be brought to him and whence he can communicate with all the forces under his command.

The worse the organisation of communication, the more an army commander is disinclined to come close to the actual scene of the fighting and by personal supervision counterbalance the failure to maintain communication between himself and the unit under his command. Again the tendency to generalise, which nearly every man pos-

sesses, will inevitably lead an army commander to imagine that an operation happening before his eyes must be similar to that of the other areas where fighting is taking place, which he cannot see. The defeat or success of a unit under the immediate observation of the army commander may result in such orders being given to the whole army as would certainly meet the situation immediately within vision but might prove disastrous taking the battle altogether.

In the Battle of Tannenberg the preliminary success enjoyed by the troops under General Samsonoff's immediate observation was such an encouraging picture that final victory appeared a matter of certainty. Unfortunately, just at this time the retreat of the two flanking corps, of which Samsonoff was totally unaware, was leading from hour to hour towards the catastrophe which was ultimately to overtake the corps in the centre. Every hour that passed brought confirmation of the fact that the 13th and 15th Corps were being more and more completely surrounded by the Germans. General Martson set out for the scene of the frontal attack to issue orders for a gradual retirement, for the divisions to withdraw one by one. Simultaneously, Samsonoff set off in a different direction, presumably to get in touch with the other army corps of his army. But these measures were taken too late.

Disaster had already overtaken the 13th and 15th Corps; German turning columns had already penetrated their flanks and rear so deeply that only a portion of the transport and a comparatively insignificant number of infantrymen managed to escape from the ring of German masses which every minute became more contracted. The two army corps fell back slowly into the shades of Tannenberg Wood, absolutely helpless and unable to use their artillery. The result of this disaster was that the Germans captured, almost in

full strength, two army corps with all their officers, and recovered possession of their own troops who had been captured earlier during the battle. Caught in the ring, although the Germans did not know it, was General Samsonoff and his personal staff.

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Night fell. Samsonoff, accompanied by five other staff officers, was guiding himself through the thick forest towards the Russian frontier. Their motor-cars had been abandoned, for it was too risky to use the roads. The little party mounted on horseback, passing out of the forest, despite the darkness were seen by a party of German infantry armed with machine guns. Amidst a hail of bullets the party dismounted and continued their way on foot, into another belt of forest. Utter darkness surrounded them. The sounds of fighting died away, and all that could be heard was the trampling of the undergrowth and an occasional voice as members of the little party called out to each other in order to keep together. From time to time a halt was called and all drew closer to make sure that nobody was missing.

General Samsonoff, who suffered from heart trouble, and found his breathing more and more difficult, lagged behind. There came a time when everybody had been called and all had answered but Samsonoff. General Postovski, the Chief of his Staff, immediately called a halt and in the thick darkness led a search for the missing general. It was fruitless. Samsonoff had evidently stopped some distance behind, for a careful and systematic search in the black darkness and repeated calling of his name produced no result. Knowing of Samsonoff's heart trouble, General Postovski surmised that he had sat down for a rest and decided that it would be better for the little party to push on and leave him to make

his way as best he could. Before daybreak the five officers met a body of Russian cavalry returning from a reconnaissance. Making themselves known to the officer in command, they were provided with horses, though two sometimes had to share one horse, and ultimately crossed the Russian frontier in safety.

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Samsonoff's ultimate fate has never been definitely cleared up, although little doubt remains that he died a lonely death during that melancholy flight through the darkened forest. Much later an artilleryman related that he had seen General Samsonoff sitting alone in the forest. He had spoken to the general and together they had continued their way. But with every step Samsonoff grew more and more tired. Daylight came, and poor Samsonoff, feeling it quite impossible to move a step farther, sat down on a hillock and ordered the soldier to make his escape without waiting for him. Artillery and rifle fire was heard, and the unfortunate general gave up all hope of getting away. As it turned out, this despair was ill-founded. The artilleryman found a way through the German cordon and ultimately rejoined his unit.

Nobody will ever know the terrible gloom which must have entered the soul of General Samsonoff as he sat there on the ground, unable to drag one foot after the other. The bitterness of defeat was in his heart and no gleam of hope was visible for the future. Who knows that his weakened heart did not rebel under the strain of this awful misfortune and that General Samsonoff did not die, in the most literal sense, of a broken heart?

In the course of time, after the soldier who had last seen Samsonoff and all the inhabitants in the immediate neighbourhood had been closely questioned, we ascertained that

in that locality an unknown soldier had been buried and that from his dead body a gold medallion had been taken. We obtained possession of the medallion and found in it the portrait of Samsonoff's wife. There can be little doubt that Samsonoff died and was buried in that lonely forest.

But this information was not obtained for some time, and during the first months after the catastrophe it was widely rumoured that Samsonoff, disguised as a common soldier, had been taken prisoner by the Germans. It was even reported that his wife had received direct news from him confirming his captivity.

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Rumours were long circulated, as is always the case in such circumstances, that the reason of the defeat of Samsonoff's Army in the Tannenberg Woods was treachery, but I can say confidently that these rumours had absolutely no foundation. The defeat was the result of faulty instructions and unhappy circumstances. The chance of war that day was on the side of the Germans.

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It might have been assumed that the Germans would have developed such a complete, and possibly unforeseen, victory, so as to invade Russian territory, especially as there were almost no troops for defence at this particular point. However, in this case the Germans, although believers in the principle of an undertaking being carried out to the end, evidently did not wish to appear drawn by an easy, but maybe temporary, victory. Later events showed that this plan had been carefully thought out, and perfectly accomplished. From this explanation one can see that when General Samsonoff's victorious advance was noticed and when the Germans withdrew several army corps from the Western Front to stop the movement, they were threatened by the

possibility of simultaneous invasion by two Russian armies moving concentrically into East Prussia. The Germans had to decide whether they would stop both armies at once by reinforcements from the Western Front, or whether they would concentrate a large body of troops against one of them, attacking one after the other.

The natural inclination would be to throw themselves against that army which had already invaded German territory. But on the other hand, the Germans must have known that Rennenkampf's advance of itself must be stopped, or at any rate slowed down, to allow of organisation in the rear and on the railroads. Against this, however, was to be set the fact that Samsonoff's Army could immediately take up the invasion exactly as Rennenkampf's had done, his advance being more dangerous for the Germans than Rennenkampf's. On this account the Germans threw the army corps, which they evidently drew from the French Front or from the interior reserves, straight against Samsonoff's Army, even strengthening this force with divisions from the army opposing Rennenkampf. I had evidence of this fact during my raid on Allenstein when we found clear traces of large bodies of troops having moved from north-east to south-west. These traces were not very fresh, but served to prove that the troops thrown over had moved in this direction by several routes. Finally, the Germans evidently decided to take advantage of the temporary halt of Rennenkampf's Army to throw a large part of their forces on Samsonoff's Army, which had just commenced a forward move, and after defeating him to turn against Rennenkampf.

General Rennenkampf, on learning of the catastrophe that had overtaken two army corps of General Samsonoff's Army, immediately began preparations for a further inva-

sion of East Prussia. He was able to get the Commander-in-Chief's sanction to this, who even promised to send him an army corps, the 22nd, to support him. This army corps was to be taken from the 10th Army at that time collected to the south of Graevo, and should have been sent by way of the town of Lyck so as to get round the Lötzen fortress and to protect the left flank of Rennenkampf's Army. Orders had already been given, and the plan of such an advance was in its initial stages when the Germans, who apparently had had time to transfer the army corps which fought Samsonoff's Army, attacked. Although the promised army corps actually did advance, it brought no essential benefit, for, meeting opposition to its advance, it was obliged to retire to its original place, thus giving the Germans the opportunity to turn General Rennenkampf's left flank.

Every hour the pressure of the German troops on Rennenkampf's Army became greater. Our regiments, heavily reduced during the fight in East Prussia, were not able to withstand the pressure of the full-manned German battalions, amongst which were the units, drawn from the south-west, most of which had not incurred any serious losses in the Tannenberg Wood fight. Moreover, battalions which had been fighting in East Prussia had very probably had their losses replaced also. Our regiments, on the other hand, during this stage of the campaign had not been reinforced; our inadequate railway system had not completed the transport to the war zone of either the first service regiments or the second line units, both of which had been mobilised in the interior of the Empire. Our ever-dwindling forces were not being augmented. Nevertheless, General Rennenkampf still declined to admit that victory was in favour of the enemy; he hoped all the time that the advance of the promised 10th Army Corps on his flank would have good

results, and he hesitated to give the order to retreat. News came in from several parts of the front of successful engagements, of determined attacks by the Germans beaten off, and of prisoners and war booty taken. At this same time the Germans, well informed by past battles of the strength and composition of Rennenkampf's Army, and evidently knowing their superiority in strength, and encouraged by the successful envelopment of two Russian army corps in Tannenberg Wood, boldly moved their forces wherever they met the least resistance.

In this way a comparatively negligible German cavalry unit, with a battery of guns, found an undefended opening and penetrated our lines deeply, and suddenly opened fire on the town and station of Gumbinnen.

The bombardment of Gumbinnen and the panic it caused amongst the transport there were reported to Rennenkampf's headquarters by two officers. But this news was not taken seriously by the Staff, notwithstanding that the capture of the station meant cutting them off from their base. It was only next morning that the picture changed and orders were hurriedly given for the forces to retire towards the Russian frontier. The difficult position of Rennenkampf's Army was due to the Germans having delivered their main attack on its left flank. Such a blow was quite to be expected, because the Germans could easily concentrate troops against this flank, and its success gave promise of big results. Rennenkampf's right flank was more drawn out towards the west, and consequently the Germans could calculate the shortest route to cut off the right army corps from our frontiers.

Having given his Chief of Staff instructions, with a view to an organised retreat of the whole Army to the Russian frontier, General Rennenkampf evidently was himself so

shaken by the successive reports received that he had lost all self-control, and, leaving his Staff, departed by motor-car for the Russian frontier. He eventually arrived in Kovno, abandoning all power over his forces and leaving them to get through the hazards of the retreat fight on their own account. This step undoubtedly threw the entire blame on to General Rennenkampf, and consequently, in November, on the left banks of the Vistula, when the accusation was made against him that because of his faulty dispositions two German army corps had failed to be surrounded, although this had been reckoned on as an accomplished fact, the higher command decided to depose him from his position as commander of an army.

This episode created a great sensation not only in Russia, but throughout the whole of Europe, showing that General Rennenkampf was considered a military star of the first magnitude. There are no people without their failings, and it happens not infrequently that an individual under this or that influence temporarily acts in direct opposition to the experiences of his mind and character, and in this way violates the reputation he has attained.

It is doubtful whether the exchange of Rennenkampf for another person brought any benefit. Possibly the errors made in the first months of the campaign would have prevented him making similar ones in the last periods. In any case, he himself was terribly overcome by the fate that overtook him. It is difficult to say whether he acknowledges that he suffered justly for the big mistakes made. At that time many of the troops were sorry for his retirement, as they continued to believe in him, in his energy, in his talents and decisive nature, notwithstanding the temporary weakness he showed in the days of the first invasion of East Prussia.

CHAPTER VIII

FIGHTING IN POLAND AND GALICIA

HAVING gained their victory over Samsonoff's Army, the Germans had put aside their natural desire to develop it, and hastened to throw their troops over to stop the new attack by Rennenkampf's Army. When the Germans had broken the 1st Army's obstinate resistance and had forced it to retreat to the frontier, they had no reason for delaying their own advance, and therefore continued their thrust in the wake of the retreating Russians as rapidly as possible.

The Germans could not have suffered any serious hindrance from difficulties of food supplies or transports of the troops, for they had well-made roads and railroads to serve them. Though the Russian troops had destroyed several railways and stations in their retreat, our main work of relaying the lines on our wide-gauge principle had not even been commenced, as at this time we preferred to use the rolling stock of the Warsaw-Vienna railroad, which then was almost at a standstill.

The numerical superiority of the German troops and the disorganised condition of the Russians after the last unsuccessful fights, but mainly their heavily depleted ranks, prevented them from making a stand on their own frontiers, especially as at this point there was no ground naturally adapted for a defensive position not already prepared. Wire-entanglement defences then had not even been thought of in the Russian Army. The first supply of barbed wire

the Russian troops received was in December 1914. The nearest point to which the Russian troops could be withdrawn, and behind which they could be reorganised to full battle strength again, was the River Nieman for the 1st Army and for the 2nd and 10th Armies the River Narew and the Augustoff Canal. For this purpose this line was strengthened by the proximity of a fort and further reinforced (a part had been prepared) by a series of defensive works contemplated at an earlier date.

By this time the formation of the 10th Army may be said to have been completed, if one does not include the organisation of the rear — and in this way the space between the 1st and 2nd Armies was filled up.

My cavalry division was included in this army and was ordered to proceed to the town of Graevo. The division had barely approached this town when I received instructions to move on to the 10th Army's right flank within the Augustoff Woods for the purpose of scouting for them and also to maintain communication with the 1st Army, which had retired to the right banks of the Nieman. Every day the Russian Army grew stronger, and the Germans encountered more opposition to their invasion of Russian territory. And, further, every step the Germans advanced, their advantage in railroad communications diminished. Even the few macadamised roads were unsuitable for the transport of heavy German artillery and waggons.

These difficulties were increased by several days' rain, in consequence of which both earth and macadamised roads became impassable; indeed, passage over the latter became more laborious than over the unprepared ground roads. A story circulated amongst the troops at this time was to the effect that a German officer prisoner had remarked during a private conversation which had taken place after he had

been questioned: "You Russians affirmed that you had not prepared for war, but then how was it possible for you to transform the roads into so impassable a state in so short a time? Evidently you spoilt them a long time ago."

At this time operations on the Austrian front were distinctly in our favour. The Austrian troops, which had crossed the Russian frontier at the beginning of the campaign, were moving in a direction south to north, their main attack being directed against the front Lyublin-Kholm, they were attacked in their turn by our advancing armies, the first engagements being fought with alternating success. In many of the battles the Austrians were superior in numbers, but day by day the opposition offered by them grew weaker, and soon they began to suffer serious failures, losing large numbers of prisoners and considerable quantities of war material. When in the first days of September the Austrians began to retreat, they were unable to make a stand on their own frontiers. Even at so strong a defensive position as the swampy valley of the River San they could not withstand the impetuous advance of our troops, who attacked in face of their intense concentrated fire and waded the river with the water up to their throats. It was difficult for the Austrians to stop our troops, animated by their rapid successes, later on. The whole of Russia, and all our Allies, were gladdened by the news of capture of the town of Lemberg, the capital of Eastern Galicia, by our armies which began their invasion from Volhynia.

Our advance was very considerably aided by the developed net of railroads and macadamised roads on Austrian territory, and the rapidity of our advance enabled our troops to seize a sufficient quantity of rolling stock of suitable gauge, a large part of which belonged to the Dekovil railroad, the lines of which in Galicia enabled us to get for-

ward speedy supplies. Further, at that season of the year we found locally in this rich country almost all the supplies necessary to feed troops. The only article the supply of which we had to organise during the advance was bread.

Up to the beginning of the twentieth century, in all wars, until the troops began to be supplied by a military commissariat, they always received rusks. Bread was only baked while stopping at large towns, where the local bakeries were used. Light movable baking-machines had not even been thought of. General Kuropatkin in his consideration for his troops, in the Russo-Japanese War, was the first to introduce military movable bakeries on a large scale, so that his troops ate almost entirely new bread baked on the spot. It is reasonable to suppose that it was mainly due to this cause that this was the first campaign where an army had fewer sick than killed and wounded, notwithstanding the fact that the war took place in a climate to which they were unaccustomed and in a country which even in peace time is subject to epidemics, including cholera. The knowledge gained in this direction during the Japanese War was successfully used in this campaign. One cannot help thinking that henceforth, in the present as well as in future wars between civilised people, the possibility of troops melting away to a greater extent from sickness than from the losses by the enemy's fire will pass to the region of unhappy memories. Losses by gunfire are inevitable in warfare; losses by sickness and epidemics, although they influence the course of military events still, are to a large extent preventable. On the other hand, feeding the troops with bread and not with rusks greatly increased the difficulties of bringing up supplies to the troops. Naturally the inconvenience pressed on us more heavily than on the enemy, especially whilst the fighting was going on nearer our own frontiers, where both sides had

railways at their disposal in widely different grades of development.

It is very possible that one of the reasons which induced the Germans to transfer their main attack to Warsaw was that by this means they hoped to provide definite assistance for their allies, the Austro-Hungarians. In the first months of the war the whole of the Polish Kingdom on the left bank of the Vistula was outside the sphere of any considerable military action. The Germans satisfied themselves by taking Kalisz, where they subjected the inhabitants to unwarranted cruelty, which eventually went very much against them, because it was especially directed against the Polish population and consequently roused an intense hatred for all Germans amongst the Polish-Russian subjects. This may have been a kind of vengeance taken by the Germans for hopes which had been frustrated. So far as is known, the Germans always felt that in case of mobilisation, the population of Polish Governments would not willingly join the ranks in the Russian Army. They even counted on large numbers of desertions to German territory. As a matter of fact, the mobilisation of the Poles passed over as smoothly as it did the rest of the Russian Governments. The cruelty of the Germans to the inhabitants of Kalisz were similar to their atrocities in Belgium, so that when a list of German vandalisms and enormities appeared in the Belgian newspapers, it was evident that Kalisz and Louvain were victims of the same system of terror.

The aim and purpose of this system evidently are by acts of inhuman cruelty to carry such fear into the hearts of the local population as to prevent possibility of acts of hostility to the enemy conqueror. Evidently the Germans regard this system as beneficial, not only for themselves but for the populations of countries taken by force of arms.

They seem to believe in it as a warning and an insurance against having to use measures even more cruel in case of any hostile act against the invading enemy. The Germans must judge for themselves what benefit these measures brought them, but as to its effect on the Belgians, Poles, Serbs, and all the Allies, there can be no two opinions. One could say that I advocated a similar system when I affirmed that one must be severe so that the moment should not arise when conditions forced one to be cruel. However, comparison is not proof. Severity can be used towards persons who in any case are partly guilty, in order to prevent others following their example.

In the German system their "warning" cruelty is exercised as soon as a place falls into their hands, without any consideration of the degree of guilt of the victims. But between severity and cruelty lies a complete abyss.

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We could only spare a few cavalry divisions for action on the left bank of the Vistula, all the infantry being concentrated on the right bank, and at first even the Warsaw garrison was comparatively small in number. The Germans, however, strictly following the principle of concentrating all available forces at the point of a main blow, at the first period of the war completely ignored this part of Russian territory. On the invasion of the Polish Kingdom by German columns, the considerable hiatus which had existed up to this time between the German and Austro-Hungarian armies was filled in.

The war gradually assumed the character of line strategy, and at this point was not far from taking the next step in line tactics — position or trench warfare.

The hiatus between the armies was filled up by German troops at the expense of weakening the lines on the

River Nieman and Augustoff Canal, as well as by the army corps transferred from the French front.

By invading Russia on the line Kovno-Grodno, the Germans calculated on forcing this defensive line at one blow, and on gaining a victory here similar to that which our troops had gained when they forced the Austrian lines, including the River Dnieper with its strong fortifications.

For the purpose of forcing a passage over the Nieman, the Germans threw forward strong infantry columns composed of several divisions with heavy artillery, the small town of Druskeniki being the centre of the attack. This town lies about midway between Kovno and Grodno. These two fortresses during the last few years were being strengthened on the lines of the latest-known military and engineering science, and should have been armed with the latest type of heavy-calibre guns. When the war started the work was in full operation, but for some reason or other no part was completed. When the mobilisation order came, this work was pushed on, but exclusively by the use of earth and wood; any rapid constructions of cement buildings could not, of course, be thought of.

The Germans managed to reach the Narew and even succeeded in throwing across it a small infantry unit, which, however, was speedily thrown back to the left bank by our troops.

Having suffered this failure, the Germans decided to give up this operation and engaged in a fresh enterprise, which was a seizure of the whole of the Polish Kingdom on the left bank of the Vistula, evidently meaning to take advantage of the rapid means they had for transferring troops, and also because our forces on this part of the front were negligible in quantity, and could be concentrated only with considerable difficulty. Notwithstanding this, the Russian

Higher Command was able, by rail and road, to bring a sufficient force up to the lines on the Vistula; part of this force they threw over to the left bank of the river. In those days, when the Germans approached the walls of Warsaw itself, and had dreams of taking the forts which we had partly destroyed, our Higher Command transported to Warsaw the Siberian regiments, mobilised in the Far East. They were met with ecstasy by the inhabitants, who called them their deliverers. These regiments were disembarked from the trains, passed through the town and thrown straight into battle. In their ranks were many officers and men who had taken part in the Japanese War, and were thoroughly seasoned troops. They gained an excellent reputation in the Japanese campaign, and more than upheld this reputation in this war.

Under the walls of Warsaw the Germans first felt the impetuosity of a bayonet attack by the Siberian riflemen.

In the *élan* of these regiments is presented a notable example of the philosophy of cultivating and developing regimental traditions.

Every army has its *corps d'élite,* distinguished before all others for its vehemence in battle and its reputation for superlative daring.

Enlistment for these units is generally made through no special channels permitting of choice or preferment, yet, thanks to the vitality of their traditions, they lose nothing of their fighting ardour or military pre-eminence.

Often it happens after an engagement that these famous regiments find their ranks decimated. The losses are made up by ordinary recruiting and reinforcement procedures, but the old spirit is in no way abated and flourishes as lustily as before.

To this class of troops belong African and Alpine rifle-

men in the French Army, the Scottish regiments in the British Army, and the Bersaglieri in the Italian Army. The latter especially distinguished themselves in October 1917 when the Austrians and Germans invaded Lombardy, and they alone withstood, like granite cliffs, the assaults of the German drunken with an easy victory — receiving on their breasts the blows of overwhelming human waves.

Under Warsaw, the Siberian riflemen, after nearly a month's weary journey in close goods trucks, immediately went into battle with a foe encouraged by many victories, and, notwithstanding, inflicted on him a serious defeat in the first stages of his violent charge. The Germans after this hurriedly retreated to their frontier. The enemy had been so sure of victory, and the early capture of Warsaw, that the Ceremonial Marshal to the Court of Saxony was with the troops, riding in a court motor-car in which the King of Saxony or the heir to the throne was to have made a procession from the Warsaw Palace to the Cathedral. This sovereign or his prince was to have been crowned with the crown of the Polish Saxon kings who long ago sat on the throne. Unhappily for them, however, our Cossacks captured both the motor-car and the Marshal.

Warsaw rejoiced, and made holiday in honour of being freed from the Teuton invasion, and all were convinced that the city would never fall into German hands. In their next attack with larger forces, the Germans in fact only managed to get to the line between the Rivers Bzura and Rava.

The old fortress — old from a modern point of view — of Ivangorod played an essential part in beating off the Germans from the Vistula line, which they had dreamed of forcing without any special effort.

The effect achieved by this fortress is well worth describ-

ing separately to show again what influence is exercised by the personality of the fortress commandant, or his immediate subordinate, who are generally afterwards known as the "Spirit of the Defence" of the fortress. Such a personality was defender of the Port Arthur fortress, General Kondratenko, who was killed in the siege. With his death fled the spirit of the fortress and soon it fell into the hands of the Japanese.

The commandant and spirit of the Ivangorod fortress was General Schwartz, a man of exceptional bravery and ability who had been one of the subordinates of General Kondratenko. It might be supposed that Schwartz was a Baltic Province German. His ancestors already in Catherine the Great's time were pure Russian people in spirit and blood, and his Christian name points in the same direction; he was called Alexi and his father's name was Vladimir. The Germans were well informed as to the work of the engineers in preparing the fortress of Ivangorod, and were fully alive to the advantage which they would have in attacking it with long-range artillery, and probably concluded that it would fall a comparatively easy victim. They did not know the man they would find there as its commandant; the appointment of General Schwartz was made only after the mobilisation. They reckoned on taking Ivangorod by assault, applying what is called the "hastened attack" method. This method, however, is evidently only effective when important victories have been gained in the open-field fighting. Then the main advantage of the attacking troops comes not so much from the "hastened attack" as from the lowering of the *moral* of the troops defending the fortress.

In this war the Russian fortresses, I am sorry to say, neither played the part nor gave the assistance expected of

them. The chief reason for this failure lay in the conditions I have already mentioned as preceding our defeats in field fighting, but besides this there were technical causes. For several years after the Japanese War, as also for years before it, no fundamental repairs were made to these fortresses. At that time Russia was carrying out a most peaceful policy — if one does not count the Japanese War, into which, as a matter of fact, she was drawn by Germany — and on that account probably reckoned that she would not be required to defend her own frontiers. Naturally our fortifications and the artillery were far behind the requirements of engineering and gunnery science. Another fundamental failing in our fortresses was that two or three years before the war General Soukhomlinoff introduced a reform, the basis of which was the abolition of special bodies of fortress troops. Up to that time every Russian fortress had its own garrison, consisting, in proportion to its size, of several battalions, regiments, or brigades of fortress units. In the event of a campaign the forces became more mobile, and were specially prepared for the defence of their fortress, carefully learning all the science of attack and defence. Field exercises were also carried out in accordance with the tactics possible within the sphere of the fortress's influence. After the application of this new reform, all the ordinary field troops in fortresses were removed. At the beginning of the war they were sent from the fortresses and attached to one of the other armies, as they were units of the field army corps. Their place in the fortresses was taken by a formation of militia units made up of elderly men or insufficiently trained troops completely without knowledge of the fortress. In the course of time, when our field forces stood on the lines of the fortresses, it can be safely stated that not one of these strong

places received its full peace garrison back again. And if any of them did return it was generally only a small part of those who originally served in the fortress.

In due course the unsatisfactory conditions of their material and moral properties became sadly evident in the degrees of resistance of the fortress defenders when attacked by an enemy. An exception to this in a better sense, besides the Ivangorod fortress, was the action at the small fortress of Osovetz covering the defile to the swampy valley of the River Narew. This fortress was twice strongly attacked by the Germans, plentifully supplied with parks of the heaviest siege artillery and, in the second attack, with mortars of calibre up to the famous 42 centimetres which played such a disastrous rôle for the Allies when the Belgian fortresses were captured after being counted as invulnerable to siege artillery. The successful defence of Osovetz was largely due to the fact that not only was the whole of the fortress staff well acquainted with it and its surroundings, but the garrison was composed not of militia but of field regiments. At the second attack this was not the case. The main strength in the defence lay not so much in the strong construction of the permanent fortifications, as in the successful and well-masked disposition of the fortress artillery. When they besieged it the second time the Germans remained about six months before the fortress, but had no essential success in their frontal attack. The fortress fell to the Germans only after the retirement of the army corps in its neighbourhood and the advance of the enemy across the River Narew, which threatened to surround this small fort. The *tête-de-pont* was not calculated to stand a siege as well as a blockade.

At this time the weakening of the German forces in East Prussia gave us the chance of making another advance from

the lines of the River Narew and the Augustoff Canal, taking advantage of the fact that at many points we held the left banks. This advance of the whole front was made from a point having the town of Stalloupenen close to our right flank, up to the right bank of the Vistula. But the main attack was directed against the front Kalvaria-Suwalki-Augustoff. The advance, although successful, was conducted much more slowly than the first advance into East Prussia at the beginning of August 1914. Although the Germans had not then used barbed-wire entanglements for defence, the field fortifications were greatly developed. Troops taking up positions set about making field fortifications, even if they were only light, before anything else was considered; and if a fight continued on the same spot for several days these fortifications were strengthened during the nights. During the beginning of October the Russian troops, gradually pressing on the Germans, again crossed the Prussian frontier. I, with my division, had to cross the frontier to the north of the Rominten forests.

In the days immediately following, the Rominten forests were the arena of stubborn battles. The Emperor William's hunting castle, in reality its ruins, changed hands more than once. Battles lasting several days, with varying success, were fought on the very frontier. At this time my command was not only over the 1st Cavalry Division, but included also the 2nd and 3rd, temporarily forming a Cavalry Corps, which were strengthened by the addition of the Ural Foot Regiment with two batteries of artillery. The development of the war operations on the farthest right flank of the 1st Army, of which at that time I became a component part, demanded the transfer of the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Divisions under me, to the neighbourhood of the town Stalloupenen. Here I crossed the German frontier fight-

ing for the third time. During the past two months the picture in East Russia, where Russian and German troops had passed five times, had naturally considerably changed. The border had finally become depopulated. I am convinced that all the people we met with were either spies or people allowed to remain as so-called residents, whose duty it was to inform the German military authorities, by different means, of the activities and movements of the Russian troops. Very possibly this may explain the fact that their relations with the Russian troops was generally of a friendly nature. Further, I can say that also in the first campaign in East Prussia we encountered no special hostility from the local village inhabitants; there were even cases of the peasants bringing out on to the road not only pails of fresh water, but also apples, and even baked bread, when we marched through. Our own soldiers' attitude to the local inhabitants was, generally speaking, friendly and trustful. As for the town populations, their attitude was on the whole indifferent, but one could buy anything they had for money. At this time Germany, including East Prussia, was not short of food.

Cases did occur indicating a directly opposite condition. Single horsemen carrying dispatches passing through villages or isolated farms were constantly fired on from the windows. Instances were even known where the men were fired on at the moment they were trustfully taking from the hand of the inhabitants a cup of water to slake their thirst. The population of such towns as Gumbinnen, who had not suffered in the least from either the war operations or during our march through, or from the troops quartered on them, were known to open a heavy fire on our troops when the retreat commenced, and especially at the transport, who were thrown into confusion by the sudden firing. The

nearness of the enemy and the absence of any regular Russian troops produced a greater confusion, if one cannot call it a panic, and made it impossible to use any kind of repressive measures on the faith-breaking inhabitants.

When we made our second advance we found most of the larger villages burnt or destroyed. Appalling also was the picture of ruin in the depopulated towns, where most of the shops had been broken into and looted.

This, it can be confidently stated, was done equally by the troops of both sides. I can confirm this, as I personally happened several times to enter small German towns and villages, which had some fairly good shops with plate-glass windows. I came in just behind our patrols and found the deserted shops and neighbouring buildings completely looted, in a way which my advanced units, however they may have desired it, could not have carried out in the time at their disposal. The bad example was shown where the soldiers were not under the immediate notice of their officers. They first of all completed the looting of those places already broken into, and then started on the untouched dwellings and shops. It is astonishing to what extent an instinct for wanton destruction enters the brains of people in such circumstances. In looted dwelling-houses you will invariably find looking-glasses smashed by blows from rifle butts. And this happens not only when troops are retreating, when they do not wish to leave the enemy anything but destroyed property, but also when troops are advancing, and the troops always have the feeling that seized territory remains in the hands of the invaders.

The second advance into East Prussia showed more than ever the agricultural richness of this country. It was for the second time overrun by enemy troops, who of course would not be sparing of the stores of food and forage, if

only for the reason that the owner almost invariably was not to be found near the warehouses and could not protect his interests. Notwithstanding all this, we were astounded at the quantities of forage found. As for the wealth in horned cattle, not only were the troops abundantly fed on them, but when retreating, every unit drove a huge herd before it. The finding of winter quarters for the troops when autumn started was at times difficult, as many populated points and single farms had been either burnt or destroyed. The Russian and German troops were equally to blame for this. At this time rumours were commonly prevalent that the Germans had poisoned the wells before retreating. I must, however, say that nothing was found to confirm this rumour. The health of our troops was better even than in peace times, and we were less disposed to believe these rumours because such a barbarian method might be double-pointed, and, in case of a change of the fortune-of-war, might recoil on the instigator himself.

CHAPTER IX

BEGINNING OF TRENCH WARFARE — RETREAT OF THE RUSSIAN ARMIES

THE simultaneous advance of the Russian troops, at the very beginning of the war, into Galicia and East Prussia, at a time when the Russian Army was far from having its full strength in the field, naturally caused a weakening of our forces in the centre on the Vistula line, but, on the other hand, doubtless gave us victory on both our flanks. Naturally Germany should have taken some decisive step, not so much in her own interest as for the sake of her ally. Austria awakened her to this fact by her persistent representations, by yielding us at the beginning of September, almost without a fight, the town of Lemberg (Lvoff), before she demanded assistance from her more powerful ally.

The German higher authorities, faithful to their principle of operating on the line of least resistance, decided to take advantage of our weakness on the Vistula line — mentioned in the previous chapter — and in September started their first advance into territory of the late Polish Kingdom, and not meeting any serious opposition easily got to the outskirts of Warsaw. To do this they had to withdraw several army corps from the French front. The imperative need of parrying this blow, which threatened the taking of Warsaw, compelled us to transfer three armies to the left banks of the Vistula, thus weakening the forces operating in Galicia and East Prussia.

which had to be strengthened by fresh army corps gradually coming forward from the interior governments and Siberia. The first advance of the Germans was completely defeated, and they were obliged to retreat beyond their own frontiers.

The delay in bringing forward all that was necessary for the troops, and in waiting for reinforcements, compelled us to give up pursuit of the Germans. When we had been reinforced we commenced our advance with the object of invading Eastern Silesia, meeting the Germans advancing into our territory at the beginning of November, to the west of Lodz. Probably the chief reason that forced the Germans to make both advances against the centre of the whole of the Russian front was the wish to help their ally, who had been compelled to retreat to the Carpathians and had begun to be uneasy about the safety of Krakau. At this time, that is about the beginning of November, the strongest Austrian fortress, Przemysl, had been surrounded. Neither the first German advance on Warsaw nor the weakening of our troops on both flanks stopped the Russian Army, however. With the arrival of fresh army corps from the interior and Siberia, our advance was renewed.

This condition of things more than ever induced the Germans to renew and hasten their advance against Warsaw; this they undertook in the middle of November 1914. In this advance their main blow was directed along the left banks of the Vistula, from the fortress of Thorn, to turn two of our armies, which had made an advance from the west through Lodz towards Kalisz. This movement of the German columns not only stopped our advance in this direction, but compelled us to weaken our troops which were still advancing, although slowly, into East Prussia.

The first stages of the German advance along the banks of the Vistula and to the west of Lodz almost ended for them in a similar catastrophe to that which befell the army corps under Samsonoff in the Tannenberg Woods. Two German army corps belonging to Mackensen's Army, taken between two fires, could see the minute approaching when they would have to lay down their arms.

After a series of successful engagements the Germans had met a strong resistance from our army corps which had stopped their advance to the west and north-west of Lodz; and at the same time from the east, along the banks of the Vistula, they were attacked by the columns of Rennenkampf's Army.

We could already see how the columns of German transport several times changed their direction to diametrically opposed points, searching for an exit from the ever-narrowing circle of Russian troops. Later it was known that one of Emperor William's sons, fearing the danger of being taken prisoner along with these army corps, was taken up in an aeroplane and flew away over our lines. The feeling of success on our side was so great that the rear organisations gave orders to have rolling stock collected in Warsaw to take away the prisoners. But owing to tactical errors for which General Rennenkampf was blamed, the living circle was not closed, and the Germans were enabled to get out of the noose and escape.

The final result was that the forces in East Prussia on either side were equalised, and the fight went on, now, however, with different prospects of victory. At this time my post was on the extreme right flank of our whole front to the north-west of the town Stalloupenen. I had under me two Divisions of Cavalry, the 1st and 2nd, to protect the right flank of the 10th Army, which had in its composi-

tion most of the army corps of the 1st Army, after the Staff of this army had been transferred to Warsaw. The successful move into East Prussia at first continued, but later died away somewhere to the west of Gumbinnen. In the later operations the engagements were comparatively small and of varying success.

On November 21st I received orders to go forward to the left bank of the Vistula to join up with the 1st Army, and take command of the 6th Field Army Corps which had only just been transferred from the right banks of the Vistula in the neighbourhood of the town of Lowicz. Having handed over my command of the Cavalry Division, I set out the next day, and for greater speed crossed the whole of East Prussia via Lyck in a motor-car and from the town of Graevo travelled by rail via Warsaw, my destination being the town of Sochatoff, where the staff of General Rennenkampf's 1st Army was. Having received the necessary directions at the headquarters of the army, on November 26th I arrived at the staff quarters of the 6th Army Corps — which was just about to attack the Germans who were advancing in their turn against the town of Lowicz. This army corps was made up of three divisions, and was to attack on a front of about twenty-five kilometres. At first this advance was successful, but when the Germans, turning my flank with fresh columns, made a direct move to seize the railway junction at Lowicz, I had to detach a considerable part of my forces to defend this point, and any further advance on my part became impossible. At the same time, the Army Staff, recognising the importance of Lowicz, sent some fresh divisions there, and ordered me to organise its defence. The front of my army corps had already increased to forty kilometres. But before these divisions, which were en-

tirely composed of second reserves, could join me they were met by a violent attack from German columns. Going for the first time into action they could not withstand this blow of German troops seasoned in battle and reinforced with heavy artillery, which was entirely lacking with us on this front. I had to organise the defence of Lowicz with my own forces and at the same time take measures to get the unnerved troops re-formed. Eventually these units not only withstood the enemy's hurricane of fire, and the furious charges of their infantry, but, in their turn, they beat the Germans by a counter-attack. When it was possible to bring up fresh units we were not only able to strengthen the position at Lowicz, but even pushed the Germans back sufficiently to permit the Lowicz railroad to continue running. In their first attack the Germans got to the very outskirts of this small town.

At this time the whole of the sector from Lowicz to the Vistula was unoccupied and consequently there was a free macadamised road through Sochatoff to Warsaw. Several signs showed that the Germans wished to take advantage of this route. To protect it, the 2nd Caucasian Army Corps under General Meeshtchenko, one of the heroes of the Russo-Japanese War, was moved forward. The suppositions were justified. After three days' profitless attempts to seize Lowicz, the Germans gave up the attacks, and turned all their attentions towards Sochatoff, and against General Meeshtchenko's army corps. At this time my army corps of five very depleted divisions occupied a front of about forty-five kilometres. During a week the Germans delivered blow after blow against General Meeshtchenko's army corps without in the meantime ceasing to attack my army corps, though with considerably less intensity. General Meeshtchenko lost 80 per cent. and

more of some of the Caucasian regiments, which nevertheless still continued to fight, and from time to time, by counter-attacks, threw the Germans back.

To every kind of stubbornness there is a limit, and in the beginning of December an order came in from the new army Chief, General Litvinoff, who had replaced Rennenkampf, saying that all the army corps of the Army were to retreat to new lines of defence on the rivers Bzura and Rava. By such change of position it was calculated to shorten the line of defence and to take advantage of the river valleys as natural barriers. My army corps had to go into reserve. I counted on giving my troops a rest, and receiving reinforcements and stocks of ammunition, but the rest only lasted for two days, after which I received orders to take the place of the 2nd Army Corps, which, weakened by the pressure of continual German attacks, held positions at the junction of the Rivers Bzura and Rava, between the 1st Siberian and 1st Field Army Corps. To occupy a front of about fifteen kilometres I had at my disposition three divisions, which were far from being of full complement. This was in the middle of December 1914.

Here commenced for me as well as for most of the army corps a new period of the war — the war of position or trench warfare. In these positions, with negligible changes, the Russian troops remained up to midsummer 1915. At first the positions by no means got the development that they attained afterwards. This was prevented in the first place by the coming of frosts which made the preparation of trenches and ways of communication extremely difficult, but the main reason was the niggardly supply of barbed wire the troops received. The lack of this material without doubt gave our enemy an ascend-

report, to the effect that bodies in a state of collapse with little sign of life were lying in the wood, and that about 200 in a similar state had been taken to the rear. It was late in the morning before the majority of these regained consciousness. Naturally the two questions which first suggested themselves were: what was the reason for this unusual occurrence and had some of those already buried been in the same state of coma and not dead at all? At the same time the medical officers reported that from the clothes of those brought in, in a half-conscious state, was a distinct smell of formalin. Those who came out of the fight confirmed the fact that during the artillery action the same smell was much stronger, to which at the time they attached no significance, thinking that this was some new explosive, and not knowing what the results of breathing these gases would be. German troops who had used the trenches as cover from our fire must have come under the action of the suffocating gases, and as a final result the Borjimovsky Wood remained in our hands, the attack costing the Germans very heavy losses.

Notwithstanding this, the enemy evidently remained satisfied with his invention, as a month later he repeated the experiment on a much larger scale when he prepared to make an attack on Volya Shidlovska's dwelling-house and spirit distillery, in the centre of my sector. This was the most serious attempt that the Germans made during the winter to break their way through to Warsaw. They prepared for the attack by an artillery bombardment lasting the whole day, largely using shells with asphyxiating gases. No protective masks had as yet been thought of; all we had was ammonia spirit in small quantities, which was distributed in medium-sized jars throughout the trenches, for sprinkling round. The troops, however,

could only take advantage of this when the firing stopped, and then only to push the air in the bottoms of the trenches and in the dug-outs. Only at this period did the troops commence to build protecting shelters. By all this artillery work, and at the price of repeated attacks delivered against the position of two of my divisions on a front of about six kilometres, the Germans were only able to take the dwelling-house and distillery, and to compel our troops, in the formation of a widely arched bend, to retire at the very most slightly more than a thousand paces. I must remark that it was very unprofitable for us to hold the stone buildings of the distillery and the massive barns, etc., of the gentleman farmer, as our troops were not only wounded by shell splinters from the shells fired from the German heavy guns, but also by pieces of stone and brick. On the other hand, the Germans were in quite a different position when they took the place, as at this time we did not possess a single heavy gun in all our army corps and our light artillery had not the strength to destroy stone buildings.

Nevertheless, General Russky, who at this time was commanding the north-western front, determined to restore our position at Volya Shidlovska's. Realising that my army corps of three divisions was not sufficiently strong, General Russky gave orders for one division after the other to be brought and placed under my orders. During this time the Germans continued their attacks, wishing to develop a success on the road to Warsaw. This compelled me to make counter-attacks as fresh divisions arrived. It was necessary to throw in three divisions, of which two were Siberian. By the strength of these troops the German break-through was stopped. I then received two more divisions and was promised as many more. I was ordered

to organise a general advance to restore the situation. At the same time I had two fortress 6-inch guns sent me, and later two more were sent, so that with their help I could smash the stone buildings of the works and farm. These four guns did comparatively little damage. The Germans, however, had time to bring within the boundaries of the farm — which because of its surrounding ditches was like a natural fort — a quantity of machine guns of which we knew nothing. They concentrated the machine guns at one point. I must add that my stock of shells was so small that only a percentage of the batteries coming in with the new divisions could be sent to take up a position, and their supplies of shells were sent to batteries already in position. Consequently these batteries had to be most sparing in using the shells.

Two of our counter-attacks were not attended by success. Our chain of troops in places got within one hundred paces of the tactical key of Volya Shidlovska's by taking advantage of local road ditches as cover, although the actual capture of the position was not attained. The frost-bound state of the country made it difficult to obtain cover of any kind from the German machine guns. Notwithstanding this, the Higher Command would not give up the idea of restoring the position.

For this purpose I received several more divisions. Two had already been collected, one made up from two brigades of 30th and 40th Divisions of the 1st Field Army Corps, and the other of four regiments from various divisions.

Altogether I had eleven divisions. My original divisions were the 4th under General Miliant, the 16th under General Tregouboff, and the 55th under Zaharoff. Later, in order of arrival, were two Siberian divisions under Gen-

erals Taube and Andreieff, the 69th under Psheloutsky, the 53rd under Gounsadze, the 25th under Kouzmin-Karavaieff, the 75th under Sokovnin, one from the 1st Army Corps under General Karepoff, and one under General Stremouchoff. Most of these divisions had already been heavily depleted, but the two last named had not been in action, and one other had barely suffered any losses.

I was convinced that the Germans would not make any further attempt to advance, but I also foresaw that the only result of a new advance on our part would be the disarrangement of our last fresh divisions. We were unequally matched in regard to artillery and machine guns, and having weighed up all the existing conditions, I reported to General Smirnoff, Commanding the 2nd Army, that I thought it impossible to continue these futile attacks, and that if the Higher Command insisted on continuation of the attempt to restore our position they must send some other commander for this purpose, and if they liked they might think I had not the ability to organise a counter-attack. General Russky's arrival at headquarters was expected that day.

At the same time I asked for the free Staff of the 6th Siberian Army Corps, which had sent me in turn all its divisions, to be sent to me that I might hand over to them a part of my command, for to take charge of eleven divisions is very difficult, and detrimental to the fighting in hand. The last of these requests was acceded to, and the half of my command on my right was placed under the Commander of the 6th Siberian Army Corps, General Vasilieff. But the Higher Command would not at once give up the idea of restoring our position. For the purpose of clearing up the situation, the Army Chief of Staff arrived the following day. At first the advance was

15 went on incessantly. This was partly due to the very mild winter. The greatest factor of superiority which the Germans had was the circumstance that all their forces were guided by one will, and the transfer of troops from the western to the eastern front was carried out without hindrance, and at the required time. At this time the Allies did not in the least co-ordinate in their actions. The timely advance by Rennenkampf's Army which had such an influence on the Marne battle was not the result of a thought-out plan or agreement of the Allies. And in the same way, when the Germans showed the greatest activity on their eastern front, our Allies made no movements on the western front, answering to the requirements developing on ours. It was considerably later, when efforts were made to co-ordinate the activities, that an effective realisation and actual result took place. That was in the spring of the first year when General Brussiloff commenced an advance earlier than arranged for, with the object of drawing off the Austrian troops who were threatening an invasion of Lombardy from the north. This actually came about because the Italians, weakening under the pressure of the Austro-Hungarians, petitioned our Commander-in-Chief for an immediate advance to save Lombardy from a hostile invasion.

The necessity to parry the German advance against our centre and right flank during the winter of 1914–15 naturally weakened our forces operating in Galicia. Our troops in Galicia at this time had been extended over a big front, because by stopping the general advance we were obliged to hold an unbroken line; notwithstanding which we gained some local victories such as the capture of some densely populated point on Austrian territory, thereby crossing the Carpathian Mountains in places and

descending on to the Hungarian plains, taking prisoners and military booty.

While in this way the field troops gradually advanced and could already see the day approaching when they would be able to reach the ancient walls of Krakau, in their rear the siege of the largest Austrian fortress, Przemysl, was being continued. The inadequate numbers of field troops made it necessary to form special army corps of militia and use them to invest the fortress, with General Selivanoff, one of the distinguished participants in the Russo-Japanese War, as their commander. General Selivanoff was killed in the first days of the Revolution.

These forces had simultaneously to do the siege work and learn how to do it. The siege progressed very slowly because of the small numbers of troops and the comparatively negligible quantity of artillery materials available.

The calculation that the fortress would soon have to surrender owing to the insufficiency of artillery and commissariat materials had absolutely no foundation. To have attempted to storm the place without first subjecting it to a most thorough artillery bombardment, and with troops drawn from the militia, would have been absolute madness. We were obliged to be satisfied with a slowly progressive siege. Early in the spring, however, about the middle of March, the Austrians opened a most disorderly artillery fire, starting early in the morning with very small result. On the cessation of this bombardment, heavy explosions were heard emanating from various fortifications and also from the fortress itself.

Very few of the besiegers guessed that the fortress was either on the point of being surrendered or that the garrison intended attempting a sally to break through our lines, and join up with their field army. Soon afterwards the

enemy was seen in thick lines in extended order behind which followed infantry columns. Evidently they had chosen the second course. Being met by stubborn opposition from the line of our besieging troops, the Austrians turned back. Soon the white flag was hoisted over the fortress and the firing gradually died down.

When the surrendered garrison had been counted and the war materials that he held had been totalled up, it was made clear that their infantry alone was double the strength of the besiegers.

Again the rule was confirmed, "that the fate of a fortress is decided in the field." This severe defeat, combined with the continued advance of our troops, of which several cavalry units had already descended on to the Hungarian plains, compelled Austria to turn to Germany, not so much with a request as a summons for her immediate active help to stop the Russian troops invading Hungary. At this time there was not a Russian soldier remaining on German territory.

On the approach of the spring break-up the operations on the Russo-German front lost their intensity. The earlier spring made it possible to recommence operations in the Austrian theatre of war some six weeks earlier. By this time the Germans must have found out that we had a large deficit in all kind of artillery munitions, and for that reason could decide that we should not be able to make a widespread and continuous advance, and thus they would still be able to keep the initiative in their hands. This condition made it possible for them to carry out the plan of transferring a considerable number of German army corps to Austria, under Mackensen, using them like a battering ram to smash down on our thin line of extended positions and to develop a success right and left along our

positions and compel our whole line to retreat. Having fulfilled this part of their plan, the Germans had in view an attack on us along the Warsaw route, or another to be decided on according to which had been weakened most by reserves having been drawn off to stop the Austro-German advance in Galicia. This plan of the Germans was attended by success, as, for the reasons I have mentioned, the initiative was in their hands and could not be disputed, and especially because during the summer campaign of 1915 the Russian Army had passed through a severe crisis in shortage of guns and ammunition and particularly of rifles and even of cartridges.

Finally, at this time the German superiority was most sharply emphasised by their predominance in heavy artillery.

CHAPTER X

MUNITIONS OF WAR

Of all wars waged by mankind at any time, whether in regard to materials used or in the variety of methods employed to destroy the enemy, none has been so remarkable as the present.

From this it is clear that the belligerent country which possesses developed industries — especially if part of these industries have been directed, even in times of peace, towards the manufacture of every kind of war material — has a great advantage in the conversion of its machinery from manufacturing ordinary goods to the production of those necessary for an army in the field.

In this respect there can be no comparison with the Central Powers and the Allies and especially between Germany and Russia. Germany calculated on the possibility of manufacturing everything required by the Army during war. With this end in view she prepared an industrial mobilisation for many years. In this she was greatly assisted by the majority of the small Powers of Europe and America placing all their war orders with the German works. Thus she was able to develop and to increase the number of works manufacturing war materials. Nevertheless, Germany's calculations were inadequate and purely theoretical, for she herself passed through a sharp crisis in the supply of artillery munitions. Russia's system in this respect was diametrically opposed to her requirements.

On the experiences of the Japanese War, an average was taken of the numbers of guns, rifles, and cartridges required for a war of unknown duration; and a proportionate quantity of war and artillery materials was got ready in peace-time. When, just prior to the war this stock of munitions had been prepared, the Government works were decreased, and even a part of the experienced workpeople were discharged. So far as is known no plans had been formed for their mobilisation when war was declared. Such were the conditions at the opening of the campaign. With comparatively large stocks of munitions in hand, no refusals were given to the demands for rifle and artillery munitions in the first two months of the war, but in October a circular order was sent calling for as much economy as possible in the use of artillery munitions. However, two months had not passed when a severe shortage appeared, especially in artillery munitions. The most critical period was without doubt in 1915. For months, batteries in action daily did not receive more than four shells per gun per day. Empty parks were then brought up, and there were cases where a battery used its last reserve stocks. An army corps would receive no more than 1,000 shells at one delivery, and would not know the date when another delivery would be made.

By this time the army commanders understood that the shortage of munitions was not a creation of overcaution, but a sad reality. Nevertheless some of the batteries which received this negligible average quantity found it possible to economise so as to keep enough to beat off an attack by the enemy.

It might be supposed that the experiences of the Russo-Japanese War should have been a clear proof of the undeveloped state of our industries and of their inability to

Ministry of War could not determine how much of any order placed would be fulfilled at the agreed time, and the times of delivery were very distant on account of these terms. The result was that the majority of works with which orders had been placed were sure not to fulfil them. Consequently the suspicion arose that the works accepted the orders with the full intention of not fulfilling them, having already been bribed by the Germans or being pro-German. Neither charge was proved to be justly made, but the orders were not executed in time and are not completed to-day. This failure compelled the Ministry of War to take other measures, although after great delay.

First of all, when the "Position" warfare began, the supply organisations and transports were disarmed and a beginning was made in the repairing of rifles captured from the Austrians. Several lots of these rifles had already been sent to the Serbian Army when we had no shortage in this respect.

Along with this the Ministry of War began to develop the productiveness of the Government Works as far as possible, but here the hindrance was the shortage in machinery and the very small quantities that the works in the interior could produce of this machinery. At the same time we turned to our Allies for help, asking them to let us have rifles, even of an older pattern, so as to enable us to arm our reserves while they were being trained. Our reserves serving as a protection to military points in the interior, made up of older men, were armed with Berdan rifles using lead bullets. Japan gave us substantial help and let us have small-calibre rifles to serve out to our field troops.

All this helped to lessen the crisis, but the position was not entirely adjusted until the end of 1916.

At some time or other military theory proved that an army should only be armed with standardised patterns of rifles, guns, and shells, as the existence of various calibres raised difficulties during the training of troops and was also attended by the danger that troops in battle might be served with cartridges or shells not of the calibre with which they were armed. But the necessities of war completely upset this principle. At the end of 1915 our troops in the firing line were using Russian, Austrian, Japanese, and also a comparatively small quantity of so-called Mexican rifles. Troops in the rear, besides being armed with a certain quantity of these patterns for training purposes, were also armed with types received from France, England, and Italy, and also with our Berdan rifles. In justice to our supply columns I can say that there was not one occasion on which troops in the firing line received cartridges not adaptable to the rifles they were using.

The arming of the artillery was not less varied, but this was due to the demands of trench warfare.

In 1915 there was a great shortage in cartridges, and the troops were smothered with circulars and orders demanding economy in their use. But at this period, on a front of 1,300 kilometres, owing to the proximity of the opposing forces, firing, especially at the first stages of position warfare, went on nearly the whole of the twenty-four hours. In the course of time, through the efforts of the army commanders, and especially of the younger officers, we could manage that many of the regiments, during an intense fire from the Germans, observed the silence of the grave, fire being opened by us only when the Germans had begun their attack. When occupying a stationary position we could supply our troops with fewer cartridges, but

in case of an engagement or in beating off a German attack any shortage of cartridges in the trenches could not but have a bad effect on the *moral* of the troops. This crisis lasted throughout 1915 and was felt even in 1916. The demands of the Higher Authorities for more munitions in view of the active operations that were coming on could not be fully realised.

A crisis not quite so severe existed in regard to machine guns. At the beginning of the campaign all field troops had a section of eight machine guns per regiment, and each cavalry division one section of eight machine guns, but it soon became apparent that our opponent was much better off in this respect. Steps were taken to increase the number of machine guns per regiment. On one hand the obstacle to this was the necessity of forming new machine-gun sections for the never-ceasing new regiments of infantry, and on the other hand the difficulties met with in having orders executed for two-wheeled machine-gun carriages. The actual machine-gun manufacture was going on very successfully, because at the outset of the campaign our Government works were engaged in making machine guns in bulk for completing the stocks calculated for regiments of the next call-up. A considerable addition was also gained in the machine guns captured from the Austrians and Germans. These used to be sent to the rear as trophies; later our workshops remade them to fire our cartridges, after which they were left with the regiments who captured them for immediate use. Some regiments had as many as forty and more machine guns, although such instances were exceptional.

I must say that a capture of large numbers of machine guns did not always give the regiments the expected advantage, because the supply of ammunition was only in

accordance with the number of machine guns available at the time.

Certainly the greatest and saddest influence on the progress of military events was the shortage in the artillery, and especially in artillery ammunition. At the beginning of the war our Army was armed with guns of types 1900 and 1902, distinguished one from the other only in details. Nothing could be found in construction better than these guns. The quantity of ammunition prepared at the outbreak of the war answered to the quantities which could be required by the number of guns that existed.

If the shortage of ammunition was in evidence much earlier than the lack of guns, this was due to the fact that guns were capable of firing twice, and even thrice, the quantity of ammunition that theoretically had been provided for. In December 1914 the replacement of worn-out guns met with a certain amount of hindrance. To surmount this difficulty we had to resort to the measure of reducing all our field batteries from eight to six guns per battery, sending back to the rear the guns weeded-out, repairing them and forming a park from which we could replace the others as they became worn-out. This measure could only afford a temporary relief to the situation. We had to arrange for an organised method of boring out the worn-out guns and refitting them with new steel bores. In the summer of 1915, when the crisis of shell supply was at its height, the Ministry of War asked the Staffs what average of shells should be allowed for, as on the basis of their calculations the organisation of ammunition works in the interior was to be made.

About this time the War Trade Committee was formed in Petrograd, the elected President of which was A. J.

Goutchkoff, who became the first War Minister of the Temporary Government after the Revolution. For the manufacture of ammunition, the idea was to employ a large number of the private works both large and small through the medium of the War Trade Committee. But to organise for the manufacture of ammunition in bulk without consideration for the corresponding requirements of guns, would have put the Russian Army into still worse difficulties. It was in May 1915, at a personal interview with General Alexeieff, then the Commander-in-Chief of the north-western front, that I clearly spoke out my mind and showed him the paradox — that the shortage in artillery ammunition had been our salvation for the following reason. The manufacture of guns, or supply of guns ordered abroad, certainly was much more difficult than the manufacture or delivery of artillery ammunition. Therefore, I emphasised the point that if we could have supplied our artillery with shells, in the last part of the campaign, as lavishly as we did in the first months of the war, not having the means to replace our worn-out guns, then, by this time — spring 1915, we should not have had a single gun fit to be fired, as they would have all been completely worn out. Therefore, when they asked me in August 1915 what average rate of manufacture should be fixed, I said the answer was dependent on another consideration — by finding out what quantities of ammunition could be used up in the guns already in use, and by all those that could be repaired, manufactured here, or ordered from abroad in a given time, then to fix the rate of ammunition manufacture required for this number of guns on the number of shells which, theoretically, can be fired from a gun. To supply the troops with shells in large quantities and to have a delay in replacement of worn-out guns might put

matters into a much worse plight, as it is better to have guns and economise in shells, than to have shells and not to have guns to fire them from.

This crisis in the field artillery of the Russian Army lasted right up to the end of 1916, gradually losing its severity, but only in 1917 could this shortage in shells be considered in the realm of departed dreams.

Much more difficult was the question of heavy artillery. At the beginning of the campaign only our field Army Corps were supplied with mortar divisions. But in regard to the supply of long-distance and heavy artillery, especially 6-inch, for our troops, the position was very much worse. It was proposed to make an addition to each field army corps of one division made up of three batteries of four guns each, one battery being armed with two long-distance 4.2 inch guns, and two batteries with 6-inch guns or howitzers. During the campaign new divisions were formed on these lines for the field army corps, and also for the newly formed army corps. The formation of these new divisions could not be finished in time in 1916, on account of the formation of new army corps, the number of which were nearly double those of peace times.

But if the Russian artillery had a shortage in field-gun shells, the lack of shells for the heavier guns was even more pronounced. In 1915, cases were known where heavy batteries were sent to the rear ostensibly for repair, but actually because of lack of ammunition for them. This position gradually got better, but nevertheless it was only in the spring of 1917, while preparing for the coming operations, that the different armies were made happy by being able to reckon on having several tens of thousands of shells for the 6-inch guns, and about 100,000 4.8-inch trench mortar bombs; and this, in comparison with the

hundreds of shells which were supplied in 1914 and even in 1915, might be considered satisfactory.

By the end of November 1914 the Germans were using a 12-inch gun in field battles, whilst we had nothing heavier than a 6-inch gun till the spring of 1916.

CHAPTER XI

THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN OF 1915

As the winter of 1914–1915 was drawing to a close we had news that the Germans were throwing part of their forces on to the Austrian front. We obtained no actual confirmation of this immediately, however, as the Germans whilst making this concentration did not bring these troops into the front line. Consequently we could not confirm the arrival of the German troops in Galicia until prisoners were taken.

The higher Russian military authorities fully understood the instability of the Galician front, because the incessant fighting during the winter had drawn away a considerable part of the reserves of the south-western to the north-western area. Our army corps, not only in the mountains, but at the foot of the Carpathians, held a position of thirty and more kilometres without the necessary heavy reserves. Moreover, the complements of the army corps were not full, because of the lack of rifles for their reserves. Naturally, our positions could not be given the necessary development, owing to the lack of working hands, and further the supply of barbed wire was quite inadequate.

In addition our troops, who not so long ago had been victorious in field fighting, found the wire not so much a means of defence as an obstacle to their own attacks. It required several defeats in consequence to make the troops understand the absolute necessity of this means of defence.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when Mackensen's phalanxes poured like lava on to one of our army corps, it could not withstand the torrent and retreated. Its retreat compelled the Higher Command to order the retreat of the neighbouring army corps. Such a thing as the retreat of a whole army, at once and on the same front only because one army corps had been defeated, became, I regret to say, a familiar occurrence in 1915. This, however, had its cause, which the Higher Command, of course, did their utmost to eradicate, but not always successfully. In order that the retreat of less than a day's march by an army corps holding a front of some tens of kilometres should not produce a corresponding retreat of its neighbours, there must be fresh reserves which can undertake a vigorous counter-attack to recover the position. Another but more passive method is to bring up fresh troops to fill up the space created between the flanks of the neighbouring bodies from between which the retiring troops had passed, and so hold the position. But both these methods demand reserves. And these generally were not present; to rail them up into Galicia, with the necessity of having to change trains at our frontiers on account of the difference of the gauge, required time, and the troops failed to do this in time. Another method of resisting an enemy that has broken through in this way, and without retiring the army corps that have not been attacked, would be to change from position to field warfare, but this would also necessitate previously collecting reserves, and during the past year our troops had had such heavy losses in their seasoned complements of officers and men that they were not quite fit for this. To carry out this kind of field warfare, so far as field defence tactics are concerned, requires much better trained troops than is the case where the

initiative is completely in our hands. Without doubt the most effective method of resisting a German advance would have been for us to attack in our turn on the widest possible front, but to this was presented the insurmountable obstacle of the ever-increasing shortage of every kind of artillery munitions. Such an advance would have meant the exhaustion of the last of our artillery stocks, and might have led to absolute lack of ammunition in case of defence.

At this stage of the war there was considerable difficulty in arranging the supply of officers for the Russian Army, and in replacing the huge losses of officers during the Russo-Japanese War. To make up the complements officers were sent to Manchuria from regiments left in Russia, the result of which was that the number of officers left in such units was cut down by nearly half. After the war, the shortage in officers, especially in the infantry, was pronounced. Various measures were taken to increase the numbers, and of these measures the most vital was increase of pay, especially among the younger officers, as the rates paid were completely out of date. Evidently in this matter the governing economic principle of supply and demand had been violated.

In this case our Government proved to be very liberal, as from a percentage standpoint the largest increase was awarded to the younger officers. The older officers such as commanders of Military Districts remained with their old rates of pay awarded as far back as the time of Alexander II.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, after a series of reforms, the War Ministry adopted the formula that on a basis of education officers should be equal. However, all this did not decide the question of providing

reserves of officers in case of increase in the Army when mobilised, nor for the reinforcements required by losses in battle. Of course, there did exist in the Russian Army the institution of an Officers' Reserve, but their numbers were far below requirements. This was proved by the Russo-Japanese War. Only two years before that war, a law was passed requiring that every youth who had completed the higher education (in the secondary schools) and served his term of military service should pass an examination as an officer of reserves. Having passed this examination successfully, and served his term as a non-commissioned officer, he was sent into the reserve and took his training periodically in the summer camps as an officer, and so kept his military knowledge up to date. The operation of this law hardly began in time enough to exert any great influence on the present war. It was only when irresistible evidence was forthcoming of the enormous losses sustained by the army in officers, especially in infantry officers, that steps were taken to devise a means of accelerating the methods of teaching the young men from the higher educational courses. This measure, however, was not sufficiently complete, as the students who were already engaged in the higher educational institutions obtained permission to postpone their training for the purpose of finishing a course of science. There was a manifest wish to interfere as little as possible with the interests of individuals and not to take away their opportunities for completing advanced lectures in special studies and technical subjects, which might in the future bring the Army greater benefit. However, when statistics were compiled, it was proved that this complement was not sufficient to supply the losses and requirements of the new formations. It was necessary to provide special classes into which the non-commissioned officers, who

had shown special ability in the ranks or who had an acknowledged right by education, could enter. This infringed the rule that officers must have the same military education. The result was the appearance of officers who had been well prepared for the position and of others who had only had four months' preparation. The latter in their turn included men of good general education, who had passed through the rural and town schools, and others who had received only an elementary education. It is true, however, that many of the latter had good fighting experience.

The great difficulty we encountered in making up our complements of officers to a standard comparative to those of the Western Powers is very easily to be understood, if only because of the numerical difference of town and rural populations, and of the small percentage of educated classes. The needs of an army of millions is immense. There were, however, many cases of men who had taken the rapid classes and become officers, doing excellent work; many men who began the campaign as private soldiers were commanding battalions by the end of 1916. At the same time, young officers joining the service at the outset of the war in most cases were also commanding battalions. This rapid promotion is to be easily understood when it is remembered that in July 1915 the divisions which came up to join me commenced with No. 125, while in peace times the highest number of a field division was 52.

No less trouble was met with in forming and supplying full complements to staffs, from the divisional staffs upwards. This difficulty especially affected the service of the General Staff. At the opening of war operations, acting on the supposition that the war would not be of long duration, the Ministry of War closed the Nicolaieffsky Academy of the General Staff, and allotted two of the older classes to a

staff, returning the youngest class to the ranks. It took them two years to understand the necessity of organising lectures so as to reinforce the officers of the General Staff with newcomers, as the actual membership was completely inadequate, owing as much to the conditions of war as to the necessity of forming new staffs. Many positions in the General Staff had to be closed, notwithstanding which the shortage continued to be felt. In the summer of 1916 rapid lectures were arranged for officers at the Nicolaieffsky Academy, to which mostly those who had had practical experience on the regimental staffs were nominated. No great difficulty was met with in finding people for the higher positions; notwithstanding the colossal increase of commanders of army corps and divisions, it only meant a speedier promotion for those who had earned a good reputation in fighting. In this way, at the beginning of 1917, there were several commanding armies who had been chiefs of divisions at the outbreak of the war.

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The Germans dealt us their first blow about the middle of April, and the immediate consequences were severely felt. For reasons already mentioned the whole of the south-western front had to retire, not only the units that had descended to the Hungarian plains, but also those holding the passes across the Carpathian Mountains. If this retirement had not been effected, the spreading of the German troops in the directions of Przemysl and Lemberg might gradually have cut off our forces from the only route by which they could descend from the mountain passes. It is quite clear that to defend mountain passes takes fewer troops than to defend mountain spurs, where it is always possible to be attacked on every spot.

The position of the Russian army corps, which had just

descended from the mountains to the approaches to the Carpathians, became more difficult, and it was beyond the strength of our troops to withstand the pressure of the Germans and Austrians encouraged by their recent successes. At that time they were showing much more stubbornness in their defence, and much more impetuosity in their attacks. Having questioned the prisoners as to the reason for this, we were told that when the Austrian troops saw that victory was evidently inclining our way they saw no sense in being obstinate, and in this way prolonging the war, but that now, when victory inclined to their side, they were ready to fight for its realisation so as to bring the war to an end as speedily as possible.

However, the Austrian victories were not of long duration; with superhuman efforts our railways gradually brought the forces in Galicia on to an equality with the enemy. This was accomplished at the price of considerably weakening the forces on the north-western front. The troops as they arrived often made attacks and won local successes. Amongst the other army corps of the north-western front which were transferred in May to Galicia was my army corps (the 6th Infantry).

When I was called from the lines of the Rivers Bzura and Rava, I went in a motor-car to the town of Syedlets — my army corps being moved by rail — to see General Alexeieff, the Commander-in-Chief of the north-west front, who sent me on in the direction of Kholm of the 4th Army of General Evert, who later became the Commander-in-Chief of the western front. Alexeieff intended to call for two army corps, one of which was mine, for the purpose of making a flank attack on the Austro-German troops pressing on the neighbouring right flank of the south-western front. I learnt on arriving at General Evert's Staff in the town of

Novo-Alexandria that the increased pressure of the Austrians on General Tcherbatcheff's Army on the River Dniester lines had compelled the High Command to send my army corps on to remain at Tcherbatcheff's disposal instead of taking part in the blow on the flank mentioned above which promised such good results. In this way the 6th Army Corps, without being detrained, was railed right through to Lemberg (Lvoff).

Having absolutely no knowledge of the position of affairs in the south-western fighting area, I continued my motor-car journey to the Staff of this front to see General Ivanoff in hopes of receiving the necessary information from him. From the Staff and from General Ivanoff I personally heard, I am sorry to say, nothing reassuring. It had already been decided that should the enemy continue his advance Przemysl was not to have more than an ordinary stubborn fortified field defence, and as it was quite clear that the Austro-German troops were determined to go round the fortress from both flanks and not attempt its capture by open attack, the decision was made that if this movement of the Germans were successful, the fortress was to be evacuated. Such an order had already been given, but at the last minute countermanded as the position of our troops appeared to be strengthened. All the same the equipment of the fortress was being taken out at that very time. The general impression I took away with me from my stay at General Ivanoff's Staff was that General Ivanoff himself and his Staff had to a great extent lost heart and faith in the possibility of bringing the Austro-German advance to a stop. The slowness in moving my army corps by rail and in retraining at the Austrian frontier gave me hopes of arriving in Lemberg not later than my Staff, and at the same time, I considered, would enable me, by taking advantage of motor-

A HALT BY THE WAYSIDE
General Gourko (left) and General Tcherbatcheff

car communication, to go to General Tcherbatcheff's Staff and get fuller directions about the part of the front to which I had to go with my army corps.

At this time General Tcherbatcheff's staff was in Brzezany. General Tcherbatcheff's personal expectations and especially those of his Chief of Staff, General Shishkievitch, were distinctly better than those of the Staff at the front. Tcherbatcheff fully concurred with the proposition I made of taking advantage of the freshness of my divisions for the purpose of making an active defence, particularly in view of the fact that on the Dniester lines in the region of Nicolaieff no positions which might have made it possible to offer a passive resistance had been already prepared. Having had my talk with General Tcherbatcheff, I left and the same evening arrived in Lemberg. I was struck with the holiday appearance of the town. Animated crowds filled the streets and cafés. At that time, the end of May, the near approach of the surrender of the place was evidently not realised. Probably all hoped apparently that the fortress of Przemysl served as an effectual protection against the Austro-German advance. Next day my Staff arrived, and my regiments commenced coming in and detraining. I immediately rode to Nicolaieff, in which town was the Staff of the 22nd Army Corps, whose territory and troops were to come under my authority. The 22nd Army Corps had to be thrown on the right flank of General Tcherbatcheff's Army. At my personal interview with the commander of this army corps, we agreed that I was to replace them the moment my staff arrived. Next day, while I was attending to the army corps business, notice came of an advance by the Austrians; this compelled me to hurry up with the reception of my new charge.

However, I was called to the telephone in the middle of

the night by the chief of one of the divisions that had joined me (of the 22nd Army Corps), and asked if I would not permit him to retire his division across the Dniester, because a new advance of the Austrians had been reported, and he had prepared and partially fortified a fairly good position on the lines of the River Dniester. Instead of allowing him to do this, I gave him most strict orders to make an advance himself immediately and throw the Austrians back from the small part of the front which they had been able to occupy. In case of necessity, I told him, he might bring up his reserves from the left bank of the Dniester and I should uphold his advance with the neighbouring division. Soon afterwards news were brought in that our advance was developing successfully; it was the Finnish Division that was advancing. (It was called the Finnish Division simply because it had been quartered in the Grand Duchy of Finland; as a matter of fact these troops were mostly recruited from the interior Governments of Russia.)

These conditions and the arrival of the fresh troops of my army corps marked the turning-point of our operations on this part of the front on the River Dniester. Happily, my right flank was covered by the wide district of the swampy Dniester approaches, so that for a considerable time I was not compelled to worry about the partial movements made by my neighbour on this side. The 18th Army Corps was on my left strengthened by the 3rd Guards Division and a brigade from my army corps, which had arrived earlier than I did.

Next day active operations commenced to compel the Germans to retire to the west. The fortune of war again favoured us, and in the course of ten days four divisions, although reduced in strength, by active operations, advancing almost half-way on the road to the town of Stryj, were

able to capture about 25,000 prisoners with a corresponding number of officers, machine guns, and every other kind of material. The shortage in cavalry, however, prevented us from developing the victory, and maybe from capturing the town of Stryj. This evidently would not have been difficult, because amongst the prisoners was a half company, the guard of Stryj, which had been sent out by the Austrians as a last hope — apparently they had used up all their reserves. At the same time the 18th Army Corps had a great victory, compelling the Germans to retire to the right shore of the Dniester with heavy losses in prisoners, guns, and war materials.

Unfortunately at this very same time the operations of the neighbouring army, defending Przemysl and the approaches to Lemberg, were going from bad to worse. The fortress of Przemysl was once more in the hands of the Austrians. Many, at the time, failed to understand what this meant. I think also that in the West of Europe people could not understand why the fortress had not made more resistance, why we had not defended it to our very utmost. The explanation must be found in the following circumstances.

The Austro-Germans did not make any serious direct attack on the fortress itself, but their successful movement of troops outside its flanks threatened to surround the place. It was therefore necessary to consider whether the fortress could stand a siege of such duration as to give the Russian troops in the field time to come to its assistance and compel the Austro-Germans to raise the siege. To calculate such a given time was extremely difficult. In any case, it meant increasing the Russian Army in complement; this was taking place, but very slowly. In addition the Russian and foreign trade organisations abroad should have been able to supply

the army with sufficient war materials for attacking operations. But before everything else, it would be necessary to provide Przemysl with an adequate garrison and the necessary war materials for the complete equipment of the fortress. One must remember that the Austrian garrison of Przemysl was about 100,000 men, who had given themselves up as prisoners. Consequently, our army would have had to provide at the least three or four army corps as garrison for the fortress and, if a further retirement was necessary, to have made up for their loss by filling up the gap with a similar body of troops.

This was an insurmountable difficulty — as, at this time, all our army corps were either drawn out in one line or were being transferred by rail. And more difficult still would have been the question of supplying these army corps with a sufficient quantity of materials, and especially with sufficient artillery, for a lengthy defence. Taking all these conditions into consideration, it is obvious that the defence of Przemysl after our armies had retreated eastwards would have given our opponents an easy victory. Of course the envelopment of Przemysl would have monopolised the attentions of large Austro-German forces, but there was nothing to show that by using the railways they could not bring up these necessary forces in the required time.

The retreat of our Army from the neighbourhood of Lemberg (Lvoff) exposed to danger the rear of Tcherbatcheff's Army. An order was received from General Ivanoff directing that General Tcherbatcheff's right flank army corps was to be withdrawn so that its right wing came into line with the left of the 17th Army Corps. Otherwise, there would have been between my forces and the 17th Army Corps a gap which I was unable to fill up, particularly as my front was more than thirty kilometres in extent. The

neighbouring army could not hold its front before Lemberg — which was soon evacuated without a fight. The retreat on the whole south-west front was carried out, so to speak, in leaps — that is, we retreated to prepared positions, one after the other along the natural local Rubicons, on the left bank of the affluents of the Dniester, all of them having an almost meridianal course. Our troops held these positions for several days, sometimes for weeks. By August part of our army entered the boundaries of Volhynia and part remained in East Galicia. A portion of my army corps was to the west of Zbaràz. Here our troops remained a long time and began to make local attacks with frequent successes, taking each time from several hundred to several thousand prisoners with corresponding numbers of machine guns, sometimes whole batteries. The pressure of the Austro-Germans troops had considerably weakened since June. This can be accounted for by the fact that the Germans had turned their main blow on to the north-eastern front more especially in the direction of Warsaw. Just as the German pressure in Galicia was successful according to the previous transfer of troops from south to north, so the necessity of holding the enemy's advance in our southern area weakened our northern front and used up its reserves at this time.

On account of this, one cannot be astonished that when the Germans collected another force against Warsaw, and fitted it out with plenty of artillery, our troops, with their severe shortage in guns, could not stand the enemy's pressure. The troops defending the part of the territory on the left banks of the Vistula were much ahead of both flanks of the Russian defensive lines. Naturally the shortage of reserves and the extended disposition of our army corps made it necessary to shorten the defensive lines before any-

thing else. It was this shortening of the line that called forth the instructions to retire from the defensive lines on the Rivers Bzura and Rava, and to take up the prepared positions some thirty kilometres to the west of Warsaw. But if this shortening movement on the one hand tended to counterbalance the shortage in reserves, on the other hand the withdrawal of our forces from well-known positions placed them on worse terms of defence, in addition to the fact that retreat always lowers the *moral* of troops.

In cases where the enemy does not immediately attack them, troops in new positions have time to look round and to learn all there is to know of their situation. One must not forget that in position warfare great weight has to be given to the extent to which the arms of all kinds are acquainted with their positions, and with the localities lying immediately in front of them. For this is required the study not of a day but of weeks. We see that troops on the western front, standing on the same place for years, have still matters to learn and work up. To what extent, then, can such a colossal work be done by troops constantly changing their position? To this, people who are not experts in the subject might say that attacking troops are often successful when attacking positions before which they have only just arrived. The answer to this is that this generally happens when the opponent has only just taken up a new position — that is, when the chances on both sides are equal. The main reason, however, lies in the fact that the side attacking holds the initiative and puts forward every effort to learn all about the locality of the position to be attacked, whereas the defenders must be everywhere to offer opposition. Besides this, a huge advantage which the attackers hold is their superior *moral,* an extremely important factor in military

affairs. It is always easier to deliver a blow than to parry one.

Moreover, it remains to be shown whether the Russian troops had at this stage of the campaign the opportunity on all occasions of using this active defence, and in their turn of always holding their opponent under the threat of a possible counter-attack. Reserves in troops and materials are equally necessary for attack and counter-attack. Our remote resources were always too late in supplying, and the reserves formed by shortening the defensive lines were short of materials, and the summer of 1915, as already stated, was the heaviest for the Russian Army in respect to the supply of these materials. Nevertheless, on all occasions where the stopping-place and means made it possible, we attempted to parry the German blows by counter-attacks.

CHAPTER XII

FLIGHT OF THE RUSSIAN POPULATION — CARE OF THE WOUNDED

THE withdrawal of the Russian armies from the defence line of the Bzura and Rava rivers, for reasons previously shown, indicated very clearly the nearness of the surrender of Warsaw. At this time on the north-western front we had to hold up the pressure of the German troops on almost the whole front.

The enemy's attempts to break through on the lower reaches of the Narew near Osovetz and Lomja were especially dangerous, for by a successful advance they would have straddled the Petrograd-Warsaw Railway and to a great extent have made it difficult to bring up transport to the armies defending the line on the Vistula. It should be borne in mind that military operations during the winter of 1914–15 went on unceasingly, and there was no lull in which we might have accumulated ammunition and reinforced the troops with men supplied with rifles. It is not surprising, then, that in the beginning of 1915 our troops were a long way behind the Germans in the number of men available, and in the supply of fighting materials. The only means of fighting the advancing Germans was by bringing up fresh reserves, but the majority of these, as already mentioned, were swallowed up in checking the Austro-German advance in Galicia. The formation of new units was retarded by the shortage of rifles.

The result of all this was that the north-western front

was compelled to evacuate one defensive line after another, suffering heavy losses from the German fire. In addition, when large masses of soldiers were retreating, tired out by fighting, and demoralised by successive failures and the uninterrupted retreat, many became separated from their regiments and were easily taken prisoners. These failures in open warfare, as usual, had their effect on the fate of the Russian fortresses of Novogeorgievsk, Kovno, and Grodno, the smaller one of Osovetz, and later on the out-of-date fortress of Brest-Litovsk.

It was not necessary for the Germans to apply a direct siege to any of these; some of them were evacuated by us for reasons similar to those which caused us to abandon the defence of Przemysl. On the other hand, the fortress of Novogeorgievsk was defended by its garrison and was taken by the Germans by storm. As for this garrison, I cannot but mention that the greater part of it was composed of militia brigades which, at the commencement of the war, were only utilised for the construction of fortified field positions. It was only a comparatively short time before the surrounding of Novogeorgievsk that they were used for operations in the field. This militia was made up either of older men, or of men who had not served the usual three years in the army, having been exempt on account of family reasons.

Units made up of such as they were called up for field troops and irreproachably performed their tasks in the ranks; but having been placed in the militia at the beginning of the war, they were imbued with the idea that they had been acknowledged as unfit for service in the field and that they would not have to shed their blood in battle. Their use in the fighting line they must have reckoned as somewhat unjust. It is natural that all this did not assist in raising the spirit of these militia units. When the surrounding of

Novogeorgievsk was an accomplished fact, the moral condition of these units was still lower. The bombardment of Novogeorgievsk, beginning immediately afterwards, with guns of the heaviest calibre, finally broke their spirit, so that they were not fit to offer any real resistance to the German storming columns. The officers of these units had also been taken from the reserve and were mostly elderly men.

Meanwhile the retreat on the whole of the north-western front continued. Several army corps, whose duty it was to hold back the strongest German attacks, melted away daily, having no chance of reinforcements, and what increased the difficulty was that they were either fighting or moving. In the early autumn of 1915 there were army corps formed of two divisions numbering less than 1,500 bayonets. At that time, men of a whole army corps formed a miniature regiment, which, properly speaking, served only as cover for their own artillery, but the guns could not show much activity owing to the scanty supply of ammunition. Nevertheless, on occasions when conditions demanded it, such units fought rear-guard actions and temporarily checked the German advance. The months at the end of the summer and the beginning of the autumn of 1915 were certainly the very heaviest of the three years of war. The Higher Authorities understood perfectly well that there might be a break in the course of operations, and that we should be able once again successfully to fight the Germans. But for this it was absolutely necessary to have a temporary lull during which the *moral* of the forces could right itself, and reinforcements and fresh equipment brought from the rear.

In the late autumn a lull gradually occurred, partly owing to the fact that the roads lines of communication had reached such a state that the Germans were no longer able to bring up supplies for their armies, and partly owing to the

considerable distance which separated the German Army from their base. They did not possess the means of bringing forward on to our territory their transport by horses, nor were there enough railroads, some of them not having been repaired nor changed to the narrow gauge.

Notwithstanding the successive failures, such as the surrender of Warsaw and its fortress — which was considered by public opinion to be a bulwark of our frontiers — the population did not lose their courage and assurance that this was only a temporary trial, and that the chances of war would again turn things in our favour.

Nevertheless the possibility of Petrograd being seized by the Germans was foreseen. In the capital, arrangements were made for the removal of the museum treasures, archives, and of the gold reserve. Calculations were made concerning the evacuation of factories working for the defence of the country. Happily, the wave of hostile inundation did not reach the capital. The evacuation of national treasures, had it taken place on a larger scale, could possibly have prevented the shameless spoliation which took place at the very beginning of the Revolution.

After leaving Brest-Litovsk the troops of our centre retreated to the meridian of the town of Baranowitchi in a region of boundless forests and impassable swamps. On this account it is but poorly populated. Here the fighting gradually died down, and by the beginning of winter had completely ceased. The efforts of the Germans on the lower reaches of the Dvina continued much longer. The enemy naturally wanted not only to take possession of this comparatively strong line of defence, but also to seize the more populous districts lying on the right bank of the Dvina, with the important railway junction, and the towns of Dvinsk and Riga. The latter was the centre of German

activities in all the three Baltic Province Governments. Realising what was the German intention in regard to these two towns, the Higher Authorities directed there a large part of the newly formed reserves that they still possessed, and also sent as much munitions as they could supply. This led to continuous and stubborn battles, giving us the chance of holding in our hands three vast salients on the left bank of the Dvina at the towns of Dvinsk, Kreutsburg, and Riga. They were so wide that they secured these three towns from bombardment by the largest of the German long-distance artillery then in action, and gave a good outlet for attacking operations. The battles, with changing fortunes, now drawing nearer, now retiring from these towns, only died down when the winter frosts arrived, just as they had subsided before on the rest of the front.

Both sides set to work to strengthen their positions in preparation for the spring campaign. This, however, did not exclude the possibility of partial attacks during the winter, whenever our troops had recovered and had been reinforced. Speaking of the Russian Army's retreat during the summer and autumn of 1915, one must remember the difficulties it suffered owing to an unforeseen circumstance — the flight of the entire population into the interior. An example of this was given by Germany during our first advance into East Prussia. Up to these times such a thing had never been known in the histories of war between civilised nations. The reason of this is probably that in previous wars the forces used were not large enough to enable them to make an advance with a front extending right across the whole of the enemy territory, and that consequently it was not the whole of the population that was affected by such an invasion. Possibly part of the population never saw the enemy's troops. It is a different matter in this war,

when the enemy invades in a compact wave sweeping everything before him in his passage. Besides, an undoubted influence on this flight of the population was the circulation amongst them of reports of the German cruelties. These, as far as I could make out, were rather isolated instances, but, according to the Russian proverb, "Good news travels slowly — bad travels fast," the stories of cruelties had spread amongst the population as much by hearsay as by the papers. In September 1914 in the Augustoff Woods on the canal, I personally received evidence from the inhabitants of the burning alive by German soldiers of a Cossack prisoner, before which enormity they cut strips from his legs to correspond with the red stripes on Cossack trousers. The explanation of this act may be that the German authorities had circulated stories amongst their troops of the unbounded cruelty of our Cossacks, which were pure fabrications. This unjust legend about the Cossacks has been circulated about the world for more than a century. In the days of the liberating Napoleonic Wars there were tales of their eating children alive and spicing them with tallow candles.

On the other hand others met and embraced them as their liberators. Actually all who meet our Cossacks acknowledge their good-nature and kind-heartedness, although this in no way affects their eminent fighting qualities.

Whilst the retreat of our troops was taking place through the Governments of the Kingdom of Poland, the flight of the local inhabitants had not as yet taken on the form of unreasonable panic, but as the retreat progressed deeper into the country the numbers of the population on the move increased more and more. It was specially intense where the people were frightened from their homes by the development of battles. There they hurriedly loaded their house-

hold goods, children and old people, on to carts, and having collected the small and large cattle, joined the unbroken, ceaseless current of people moving from west to east. The rains naturally compelled them to take advantage of the few macadamised roads, in consequence of which these highways were quickly overflowing with the numbers, and progress was difficult. In course of time this wave of humanity moving without any order quickly destroyed all local supplies even the litter for cattle. People met with no less difficulty in feeding themselves. Amongst the refugees appeared disease and a considerable mortality. The whole route of this exodus was marked by small hillocks with hastily erected crosses over them. For such an occurrence neither the public organisations of the Zemstvo, Town Councils, Red Cross, nor the Government administration were prepared. Hurriedly they all began taking measures to bring this movement into some degree of order. The railways gave immense assistance, receiving all those who had lost their horses on the way and who had to go farther forward on foot. These were the most happy.

The public organisations arranged feeding-points *en route,* gave medical help, sent those entrained to centres, which in turn provided for their housing. Further attempts were made to buy the cattle from the population, so as to avert a famine. There were no definite results from this measure, on account of wet snow falls. Germany was tried in this way in the evacuation of East Prussia; Belgium and Northern France suffered it too, but everywhere the railways were at the service of the refugees, whose flight did not coincide with the late autumn and the commencement of the frost and snow blizzards. This is where the difference in these movements lay. Only those who have actually seen the flight of the Russian population can in any way conceive

the horrors which attended it. Personally, my fate stood me in good stead, and I never saw the picture, as, during our retreat from Galicia, I was holding a position west of Warsaw, and several months before the retreat from the north-western front I and my army corps were transferred to East Galicia. Still, men who had fought in several wars and many bloody battles told me no horrors of a field of battle which can be compared to the awful spectacle of this ceaseless exodus of a population knowing neither the object of the movement, nor a place where they might find rest, food, and housing. Themselves in an awful condition, they increased the troubles of the troops, especially of the transport, who had to move along roads filled with this disorganised human wave. Many a time our forces had to stop and fight a rear-guard action, just to allow this crowd to make room for the troops. The troops, however, had only to be held up by a battle for a day or two, when a large portion of the refugees would turn from the road, and form into a gipsy camp, not wishing to move forward because they felt certain that the retreat of the troops had stopped, and that our advance would be soon starting again, and so enable them to return to their own homes. Naturally when the troops retreated again, and the roads were taken up by troops and transport, many of these gipsy camps were left behind, and in this way fell into the hands of the enemy. The fate of these people must have been most bitter. To think first of the futility of all their losses, of the difficulty they would have in getting food from the enemy, who himself at the time was very much in need of it, and then of the possibility of a still greater difficulty in returning to their homes and feeling almost certain they would only find them in ruins — God only knows what sufferings were endured here, how many tears were shed, and how many human

lives were given as victims to the inexorable Moloch of War.

From the time the army corps reached their winter positions, things quieted down. Many of the corps remained in the same place for a year and more. Most of these army corps were formed almost entirely from rear formations, with a negligible number of infantry; happily the majority retained their artillery. The rear organisations of the army corps are seldom afflicted by shortage in complement. The main reason of this is that most of them possess a considerable number of horses, which always require the presence of men, mostly those who are not fit for duty in the ranks, to look after them. Amongst our Allies is a widely spread opinion that the Russian Army misuses its administrative and supply units; but if this condition is actually so, then it is only because of cruel necessity. The main reasons are our distances, the shortage of mechanical means of transport, and the distance of the fighting lines from the place where they get their reinforcements and from well-populated towns. The most heavily manned branches of our rear organisation are the transport and medical departments. The size of the first is in direct ratio to the distance dividing the troops from the nearest station, and the development of the narrow-gauge rails, actually the distance that the troops may be compelled to advance from their forward stations.

The number of medical units can be explained thus. During intensive fighting several army corps have their base on one of the railroads and consequently several tens of thousands of wounded must receive help and food possibly for a few days, until the hospital trains carry them away to the nearest well-populated towns, where, also in their turn, must be extensive accommodation to receive them. Only after this can the wounded gradually be carried in hospital

trains to the interior. Sending the wounded direct to the interior from hospitals to which they have been brought by horses from the firing line would require more trains than any railway could possibly supply, besides which the journey would be an exceedingly slow one, and consequently inimical to the successful healing of the wounds. France having her railways more highly developed, and with a more liberal supply of rolling stock, and shorter distances to run, at the start of the war adopted this system, but the results were more than sad. Cases were known where trains with wounded arrived at their destination after being on the way two weeks, besides which a considerable percentage of the wounded contracted gangrene. What statistician can calculate the numbers of limbs lost owing to this system? The streets of Paris would give some indication.

Under our conditions the results would have been even worse, if we take into account the inadequacy of our railroads, which rendered it impossible to bring up the medical transport and hospitals in time, especially where serious fighting was taking place. It is understood that every army corps to a certain extent must have its own transports for wounded, its own distribution points and places to treat the wounded in.

But to understand why our transport should be larger than those in the armies of our Allies or the Germans, it is sufficient to remember that the work of one three-ton motor-lorry served by two people equals the work of from 120 to 240 one-horse vehicles served by as many men. Consequently, if one army has only 1,000 three-ton motor-lorries, which is considerably less than our Allies have in theirs, it works out as if it had from 120,000 to 240,000 one-horse vehicles served by a similar number of men. No less a service is given by the motor-cars that our Allies use to

carry their wounded from the first-line hospitals to the base. In case of actual necessity these motor-cars can work the whole day round, only changing the chauffeur, while horse-drawn medical waggons can only work as much as ten hours a day. If, further, our bad roads are taken into consideration, then we see that even the moderate number of medical motor-cars we have could not always be used.

Notwithstanding all these conditions and the great difficulty in delivering to the troops everything necessary, and increasing quantities, our armies in two and a half years' campaign suffered no real shortage so far as food and equipment were concerned. Only boots were difficult to obtain, and in the course of time, with the help of public organisation, this was remedied.

In order to give a comprehensive idea of our medical work I must mention this: the majority of our wounded received first-aid on the field; those who were able walked to the dressing-station; the severely wounded were brought by the medical units on stretchers to the divisional points or to some mobile station belonging to a public organisation under the Red Cross.

In the majority of cases the extension of positions occupied by divisions compelled them to have attached to them for all the war such mobile sections, because otherwise all the wounded drifting to one point would have had to travel several extra kilometres to one point. Most of such units to which the wounded came first, after having passed only through the hands of the regimental surgeons, were equipped so that in case of wounded needing immediate attention on arrival, they could perform the most serious operations under the strictest aseptic conditions, after which the wounded could remain a few days on the spot until carrying

MOST CONVENIENT AND COMFORTABLE MEANS OF TRANSFERRING WOUNDED ON BAD ROADS

them in a two-wheeled vehicle did not threaten mortal consequences. The rest of the wounded were only re-dressed if necessary, and then sent on to the hospital belonging to the army corps and, if possible, to one of the main reception places organised and carried on by the army medical service. There the wounded requiring long treatment and also those giving hopes of early recovery were distributed. The latter were sent to hospitals under the army jurisdiction, and when healed returned to their regiments. The wounded requiring prolonged treatment were sent in trainloads to the nearest populated centre, where hospitals, mostly under the orders of the Army Staff, were opened in local buildings or in specially constructed barracks and tents.

In this army reception hall the wounded were brought; the severely wounded, as many as possible, in special hospital trains where each man had his own bunk, but, I am sorry to say, we could not choke the railways nearest to the fighting line with such trains, as the majority of these were required for the transport of wounded from the last reception halls to the interior, for distances of thousands of kilometres. There was no option but to be satisfied with trains composed of goods trucks which had detrained troops or goods at the terminal. When making up such a train, there was added a so-called unit (*kader*) of the hospital train, consisting of four trucks already equipped and waiting at the stations, one truck for dressings, one for the medical staff — doctor, sisters, and orderlies — and two for goods — one with stores for fitting up the goods trucks for the wounded, and with movable stores for winter use, and one truck as a kitchen. On every goods truck carrying wounded was a servant whose duty it was to attend to the stoves and, if specially required, to help the orderlies at the

first stoppage by reporting to the medical staff. During a stoppage of the train, the wounded requiring immediate attention were carried to the dressing truck.

This system in all its intricacy and primitiveness was inevitable, and if properly carried out gave good results. The most troublesome factor was the evacuation of wounded in those cases where, after unexpected defensive battles, army corps after army corps arrived to some army, and war conditions demanded a speedy transport of troops and it was necessary to give up hospital trains. In these cases the rear organisation belonging to the army corps invariably arrived too late, and of course necessitated their utilising the medical services of the troops on the spot which were organised for a considerable number of wounded. Specially heavy were the conditions of the evacuation during the December 1916 battles in Roumania. With the negligible carrying power of the Roumanian railways and the small number of our roads approaching the Roumanian frontiers, which could not even serve the needs of the infantry alone, there could be no thought of any addition of hospital trains and trains for the rear organisation. Additions would have affected the speed of transporting the troops and would have risked splitting them into groups when near the enemy. That not one case of an epidemic occurred amongst the troops proves that they suffered no lack of food and clothing, and that the medical help was effective, although there had been signs of an outbreak of illness. Cholera, typhoid, and intermittent fever, and even that plague of all earlier wars, typhus, with its intense contagion, were almost non-existent. These illnesses almost exclusively attacked the populations, especially when under flight before the German invaders. The only illness which, starting in the spring of 1916, took on an epidemic form was scurvy. I am sorry to say that medi-

cine knows no actual preventive or quick antidote to this illness. Scientists even quarrel as to its cause and whether it is contagious or not. Observations on it amongst the troops gives positive indication of its contagion. The causes of this illness are mostly excessive fatigue, the confined air in the dug-outs, and especially monotony of food.

I must say that though our troops had plenty of food, it was only of one kind. The daily dinner consisted of meat, soup with vegetables or with flour products added, various *kashas* (porridges), macaroni, potatoes, etc. The second dish was buckwheat *kasha* (porridge) or some other kind. Supper always consisted of meat or fish soup. Besides this the troops received as much rye bread, tea, and sugar as they required.

Of the varieties of food received by the soldiers in the Allies' armies, the Russian soldiers have no conception. It would be difficult to conceive how the commissariat could undertake a delivery of coffee, wine, cheese, preserved vegetables in tins, or jam, to supply 10,000,000 mouths. Even our officers were very often unable to procure these products while in the front lines.

Our medical organisation was due in a great part to the activities of public institutions, such as the United Zemstvos, the United Towns, the Red Cross, and several other smaller organisations and private individuals. And this as a whole resulted that the general condition of the troops, with the rarest exceptions, was better than in barrack life during peace times and the percentage of sickness was somewhat lower.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CRUCIAL WINTER OF 1915–16

THE winter of 1915–16 was in many respects the turning-point for the Russian Army in the present campaign. In some respects its condition was better, whereas in others it was somewhat worse.

Under the first heading was the considerable increase in supplies of all materials required by the artillery, both in regard to those made abroad and those produced in the Russian works. The improvements in the methods of carrying on position warfare, both for attack and defence; the improvement in the officers, the gradual, although far from sufficient, increase of aviation, all tended to increase our fighting power. Under the second heading must be included the perceptibly increasing difficulty of delivering food products both for the armies and for the large town centres. There was a noticeable depreciation in the work of the railways and derangements continually occurred in the trade output.

The improvement in the delivery of materials for the artillery was brought about by several means; partly because our Allies and also the Neutral Powers, especially America, came to our help, by supplying us, amongst other articles, with a large quantity of barbed wire and rails. Above all the greatest influence in this direction was the gradual development of our own industries. New works, mainly small, appeared. At the same time the Government works increased their activities, but thanks to this the mo-

ment arrived when the production of local metals was not enough for the requirements, notwithstanding the receipt of a certain amount of iron ore from Sweden.

This condition of things mainly reacted on the articles used by the population, particularly by the peasants in their agricultural works, and by the railways for constructive purposes. A special Committee of Distribution was formed in conjunction with the Ministry of War, whose duty it was to distribute the metals which came in from the foundries. The work of increasing the production of supplies necessary for the troops was actively taken up by the Zemstvos and Town Councils, who in their turn attracted the local industrial powers to the work. At the same time it was felt that the railroads were already unable to fulfil their work as irreproachably as they had done at the beginning of the war. As time went on this appeared to be a "*cercle vicieux*," which later became more and more narrow.

At the beginning of the mobilisation, not only were the peasants called to arms, but also the works and mining centre populations, and amongst these the workmen from railroad workshops and coal mines. The reason for this was the wish not to throw all the weight of military service on to the agricultural population. These measures in the first place showed in the decrease of production in the coal-mining industry. In the first year of the war, this influence had not yet appeared, as the railways and large works had huge stocks of fuel. In the course of time, however, these stocks gradually lessened. It was then that this "*cercle vicieux*" began. The decreasing production of coal gradually lowered the production of metals. The decreased output of metals reacted on their delivery to the railroad workshops, and on the works producing railroad rolling stock. In its turn this produced an ever-increasing delivery to the

railway workshops of locomotives and goods trucks for repairs. The latter resulted in there not being enough goods trucks for coal haulage. Here this "*cercle vicieux*" completed its evil course; the non-delivery of trucks made the coal mines still further diminish their production, and not increase their stocks without good reason; the non-delivery of coal to the foundries in the course of time lowered their productiveness, and this, in its turn, not only affected the work of the railway workshops, but also the metallurgical industries of the country as a whole.

The difficulty in supplying food for the troops was specially noticeable on account of the necessity of lessening the delivery of meat to the troops. It may seem strange that an agricultural and cattle-producing country, having closed its frontiers to exports, should become short of any kind of agricultural products. Actually this is easily explained. A considerable number of the men called to the colours belonged to the agricultural population, which, when at home, is mainly fed on cereals and products which cannot be put on the market by small owners. The use of meat in the villages is an exception. Owing to the scattered state of the villages, and in the majority of cases, their distance from the towns, slaughter of large cattle rarely takes place. At the beginning of war operations, the troops' meat rations were doubled. Consequently the supply required by the army equalling about 10,000 head of cattle daily, a quantity far from being compensated for by the stoppage of the export of meat. This condition would not have produced its effect if the Siberian Railway had continued to work as intensively as it had done at the beginning of the war, as the stocks of meat in Siberia could easily have covered the requirements of the armies. Besides this, the curtailment of the sale of spirits to the population had its effect by increas-

ing the demand for every kind of food product, and also was the reason for the people having more money. On the other side the richer agricultural population did not see the necessity of carrying to market their small products such as poultry, eggs, and butter. The other article, the production of which had slightly lessened, and did not satisfy all the demands of population and army, was sugar. Here the same phenomenon occurred. The colossal increase of army sugar rations, and the increase of money with the farming populations from the stoppage of spirituous liquors, made the demand for sugar grow out of all proportions. It is enough to say that the soldiers each received six pounds of sugar monthly, against the two pounds they received in peace times. This, in itself, must have balanced our export, which had not been completely stopped. It was shipped by sea to our Allies and over the Persian frontiers in an attempt to maintain the value of our rouble in Persia. An idea exists that by this route our sugar got to Turkey and thence to Germany. This question had to be settled by legal process, but it was stopped after the Revolution, and the principal of the people accused became Minister of Finance in the Ukrainian Rada.

In the winter of 1915–16 all these phenomena did not affect our army. The army continued to live its normal life, every day healing the wounds it had received from the unsuccessful military operations in the summer and autumn of 1915. The main attention of the chiefs was given to the training of troops, which was most necessary as many units had to be completely re-formed, so great had been their losses during the past six months. This, of course, was made easier, by the return to the ranks of large numbers of wounded men and officers. In addition, feverish preparations were being made for active operations, although there

was no intention to carry these out on a large scale until the spring set in. But as parts of the 6th Army Corps which I commanded had been engaged in active operations right up to the beginning of November — about the 4th of this month a part of my troops acting with the 17th Army Corps in a short engagement had taken more than 10,000 Austrian prisoners and captured guns and machine guns — it was decided to give them a rest until the beginning of the spring operations. I took advantage of the lull to take a three weeks' rest, after eighteen months of campaigning, in the Caucasian water-cure establishment in Kislovodsk. Before my departure, however, I made an agreement with General Saharoff, to whose army my 6th Army Corps belonged, that if my forces were required for active operations, I would return before my leave was up. A little more than a week after my arrival in Kislovodsk I received a telegram from General Alexeieff, the Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, calling me to the Headquarters in Mohileff, for some purpose unknown to me. In two days I arrived in Mohileff, and learnt from General Alexeieff that owing to the illness of General Russky, Commander-in-Chief on the northern front — the Russian Army then had three fronts, north, west, and south-west — his place would be taken temporarily by General Pleve, commanding the 5th Army, which had its position on the Dvina. I was to go to the town of Dvinsk, and take up the command of this army. General Alexeieff did not inform me, however, what were to be my movements when General Pleve returned to command the 5th Army. The Emperor was not at Headquarters at this time, and I did not see him.

The fact that I had left my army corps only for three weeks, the possibility of my return to it after fulfilling these temporary instructions, and the preparations for the spring

operations, all gave me a desire to go for a day to the town of Zbaràz — where my Staff had been since August. I did not stay with the army corps much more than a day, especially as I had no need to say good-bye to my regiments — to which naturally I had become closely attached by a year's fighting comradeship — because there was every chance of my returning to them. Nevertheless, many of my comrades, especially amongst the staff officers, expressed the wish to accompany me and transfer to the staff of the 5th Army. I was sorry not to have the right to authorise this. I limited myself to taking with me Captain Arngold, my permanent orderly, who had been with me ever since the first days of mobilisation, having been sent to me in this capacity from the Petrograd Lancer Regiment.

It was especially difficult for me to leave my Chief of Staff, Major-General Alexeieff. We had only been together since the first day I took over the command of the 6th Army Corps, but a year of war conditions gives one an opportunity of knowing a person better than ten years of association in peace times. During this year I was able to form an estimate of Major-General Alexeieff, both as my nearest assistant in military duties and as a man. What I valued most in him was his straightforwardness and frankness, and in work his energetic presentation of his ideas and convictions, without considering whether they were in line with the views and wishes of the Chief. In one word, he distinguished himself by an independent character, so seldom to be found in Chiefs or higher authorities. Besides this he was an experienced staff worker and fulfilled all instructions implicitly. At times rough and fiery-tempered, he was, however, exactly the same in this respects to his juniors and to his seniors. Before leaving each other we arranged that if my new command became a permanent one, I would have him with me at

the first opportunity, and then he agreed if this came about to take the less independent duties as Quartermaster-General to the Army Staff.

In this without doubt he showed a lack of ambition, a quality for which he was noted.

About the middle of December I arrived in Dvinsk, and commenced my duties as Commander of the 5th Army. This army, not long before, had finished fighting between Dvinsk and Kreutzburg, and had already managed to a great extent to get reinforcements. Soon after my arrival I made my rounds of the front lines, and inspected the work of the Staffs. What I noticed most was that each army corps more or less had its own system in fortifying the positions, its own system of training the troops as preparation for the imminent active operations. Not embarrassed by the possibility of my post being only a temporary one, I immediately issued orders which would regulate these matters. The other question which I immediately raised and settled was the gradual decrease of the numbers of army corps standing in the front lines, and the corresponding increase in numbers of army corps in reserve, my final idea being an advance on the left bank of the Dvina by taking the opportunity of crossing when it should be frozen over in the near future. But my calculations were upset, for rapidly as these army corps were put in reserve, they were as rapidly taken from me, their services evidently being more urgently required elsewhere. Either they were taken into reserve by someone higher in command or sent to some other front, perhaps because at this time a serious advance was contemplated on the south-western front under the command of General Tcherbatcheff.

On account of my army corps being taken away and partly joined up to the reserves with the Commander-in-Chief, I

was obliged to defer active operations in the near future and to direct all my attentions to perfecting my positions and training my troops. The reason that General Pleve had been given only a temporary command as Chief on the northern front was because General Tcherbatcheff was to have this post, but as in December he had active operations in view, he could not take up the post until these plans were carried out. However, in the beginning of February 1916 these intentions were altered. The Emperor, Commander-in-Chief of all the Forces, was expected in the Dvinsk region during the month. During his presence there it was to be decided who was to have the post of Commander of the northern armies, and evidently it was expected that the decision would be in favour of General Pleve.

When the Emperor had a personal interview with General Pleve he saw quite clearly that General Pleve's physical powers — he was sixty-six years of age — had so weakened that he would have great difficulty in undertaking this command. Having held a review, the Emperor departed without speaking his mind over the question of change or confirming the appointment of a Chief to this area. It was several days later that we knew that General Kuropatkin was appointed Commander-in-Chief on the northern front.

General Kuropatkin was the late Commander-in-Chief of the Manchurian Army. Naturally this appointment astonished a good many, while others expected that the experiences Kuropatkin had gained in the Manchurian Campaign would enable him to discharge his duties successfully. At the outset of the campaign, General Kuropatkin had more than once applied to the Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicolai Nicolaievitch, asking for at least a field army corps to command, but he always received a refusal. It was only when the Emperor took the Commander-

in-Chief's post himself that his request was fulfilled, and in the autumn of 1915 he received the command of the Grenadier Army Corps. His appointment to the post of Commander-in-Chief on the northern front most probably was the result of the visit the Emperor made to the sector the Grenadier Army Corps held. All that was seen there, the extraordinary carefulness exhibited by General Kuropatkin from a fighting, administrative, and commissariat standpoint, evidently raised him in the eyes of the Emperor again. I must say that the distinguishing characteristics of General Kuropatkin were always his extraordinary care of all the troops under his charge. This quality, in conjunction with his undoubtedly effective administrative abilities, always acted in his favour.

General Kuropatkin took up his duties in the middle of February and, without going to Pskoff, where the Staff of the Army was, commenced with a tour of the army staffs, visited one army corps of each army, reviewed the units resting, and always inspected some part of the front trenches. Naturally this kind of action was much in his favour. The matter stood as follows: the enormous distances separating staffs of a front from their front lines in their turn corresponded to the enormous extent of our fighting lines. Consequently the Commander-in-Chief and several of the army commanders very seldom visited their troops in the front lines. As for the Commander-in-Chief visiting the front positions, this would require a three days' absence from Headquarters. Evidently to this was due that fact that I, at any rate, had not seen any Commander-in-Chief visiting the front trenches before. To this, of course, it may be remarked that it is possible to visit a medium-sized front

position, when it would be physically impossible to make a tour of a considerable part of the front, where the front is several hundreds of kilometres in extent. The value of such visits lies not only in the appearance of the Commander-in-Chief amidst his troops in the front lines, but also in the knowledge every unit has that it is always possible for the Commander-in-Chief to appear in advanced positions personally to check the work of the troops and the Chiefs on the spot.

Having remained three days in Dvinsk, just before his departure, General Kuropatkin notified me that he had received an inquiry from General Alexeieff as to whether he had any objections to my being confirmed in the command of the 5th Army which I had been given temporarily. Several days later I received the appointment. This condition of things to a certain extent lightened my work, gave me scope to enforce such measures as I had hesitated to introduce before, fearing that General Pleve on his return would change them.

After General Kuropatkin took up his post, he began a careful study of the position of affairs at the front, and along with his commanders considered when and at what place it would be most profitable to commence the winter advance. The choice fell within the area held by the 5th Army on the left bank of the Dvina near Jacobstadt. Heavy artillery was gradually brought up to this district, not, however, more than one hundred guns, and then mostly old fortress types not more than 6-inch calibre, taken from Kovno and Grodno, and adapted to the requirements of field warfare. Preparatory work could only be finished by the end of March. It was calculated that the thaw would not have started yet.

What happened as a result of the advance clearly showed

that our preparations were not hidden from the enemy, who concentrated artillery, not less in strength than ours, but with the important advantage of a plentiful supply of shells, against which we had to count every projectile. Artillery preparation, on account of this, was arranged for only one day, with the idea that before darkness had set in our infantry could commence the attack and take the front line of the enemy fortifications. The advance, at first successful, soon made it apparent that a serious development of our operations could not be made both on account of the shortage in material needs, and because of the difficulty of making an advance in winter in position warfare.

One must take in consideration that the earth here is frozen three to four feet deep, and that consequently any work of making trenches, during an advance and under enemy fire, is almost an impossibility. No less trouble is caused when converting an enemy's captured fortification to our defence. Further the weather completely broke down, frost changing to thaw, with frost by night. The troops were wet through lying in the snow, and at night their clothes were frozen, giving rise to a good many cases of frozen feet and hands.

It should be added that the vigorous measures taken to lessen the cases of frostbite produced excellent results all through the war.

Large numbers of "trench feet" were quite unknown in our Army, although prevalent in the armies of our Allies. They usually occur in damp weather when the mercury stands nearly at zero. The reason of this phenomenon is not so much due to our people having more endurance, as to their footgear, which allows the expansion of the foot and calf, the restriction of which interferes with circulation of

blood. We had more difficulty in fighting this freezing of feet in hard frosts because of the difficulty of supplying the troops with a sufficient quantity of felt boots, used by our peasants.

CHAPTER XIV

SUMMER FIGHTING OF 1916

OUR advance in March 1916 was undertaken under the persistent demands of the French Headquarters, who wanted to secure some relief for the French Army defending the approaches to Verdun.

The attacking operations of the winter 1915–16 on the south-western point, as also those undertaken in March 1916 in the region of the northern front, gave no fundamental successes. They, however, clearly showed that an advance made under the conditions of trench warfare, during the periods of frosts or winter thaws, in our climate placed the advancing forces in a much more difficult position than are the defending armies. Besides, by personal observations on the activities of troops and their Chiefs, I clearly saw that the preparation of the troops, and of our staffs for making an offensive in position warfare was insufficient.

The conditions of these tactics are so far removed in their details from field warfare, that naturally they demand a special form of training, and a careful study and execution of every practical detail. Only in March 1916 did the Headquarters begin to issue regulations as to the action of troops in position warfare. These insistent directions had, generally speaking, been compiled from the French, and partly from the German orders, which were not sufficiently adaptable to the conditions of the Russian theatre of war. This gave me the idea of composing my own regulations in

this direction, without waiting the promised revision from Headquarters.

To assist me in this I asked my Chief of Staff, General Miller, to choose an officer of the General Staff, and attach him to me. I gave him the general plan of the work to be done, and as material for him to work on I gave him the orders I had issued in 1915 and 1916 to the 6th Army Corps and to the 5th Army. These orders, of course, could not give a systematic general regulation, because they had been issued for a special purpose in consequence of my observing if the troops had not fulfilled my orders given by word of mouth, or the instructions given in view of active operations. In these same orders our past active operations were examined. As this officer of the General Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Zamjitsky, worked out any division of this General Order, I examined and corrected it; after which it was printed. Early in April 1916 the first edition came out, and a year later the seventh edition, each new edition being made fuller in detail and corrected up to date. Each edition was from 10,000 to 30,000 copies. Further, at the beginning of 1917 I gave the rights of this edition to several army staffs and to the General Staff in Petrograd. The last edition was specially for use as a manual in the military schools preparing officers for the Army. The successful issue of this edition proved how much it was needed.

Immediately after the conclusion of the almost futile March operations, projects were worked out for the spring campaign, but on a much more extensive scale. The preparations in this case were made with more care so far as engineering was concerned. For the first time were applied the so-called " Out-going (Salients) Platzdarm "; these are fortified works to serve as cover and outgoing trenches for attacking troops. Particularly anxious over the artillery

therefore, all reserves of the Higher Command were ordered there, together with part of the heavy artillery from other armies and army corps.

From this moment the plans already commenced continued, with full effect. Seven army corps were to take part in the proposed operations. The time of their fulfilment was to be in accord with the main attack on the western front, marked for the first days in July. The Austrians, however, at the middle of May, on the Italian front, commenced an energetic advance, having in view a thrust from north to south to reach the sea at Venice and cut off a large part of the Italian Army.

The operations of the Austrian troops were sufficiently successful to enable them to burst into Italian territory and move forward comparatively quickly. Evidently the Italian Government were not hopeful of stopping this victorious advance of the Austrians with their own forces and therefore appealed to the Russian Higher Command asking its help for Italy, and an immediate advance against the Austrian Army, calculating that this would compel the enemy to withdraw to the east a portion of the troops attacking Italy. The Russian Higher Command, wishing to come to the help of the Allies, made a heroic decision and ordered General Brussiloff to commence attacking operations in the shortest time possible, and not to wait or consider the time or state of preparedness for the main blow as planned on the western front.

Under such conditions General Brussiloff was obliged to rely on the element of surprise for his main chance of success and to make an attack, not on one particular point with concentrated total forces, but to attack within the limits of all his five armies on the widest front.

The result of General Brussiloff's advance passed all

expectation. Evidently what afforded us the greatest help was that the Austrians did not expect such an attack at this time, especially on so wide a front. It must not be forgotten, however, that by the original Headquarters plans, the south-west front was only to have a secondary place, and therefore naturally the main reserves of the Higher Command were mostly to be found on the western front. Then on the other side, just as naturally was the wish to use every means to develop this victory gained at the outset by General Brussiloff's troops.

From this moment commenced a transfer of army corps as far as the railroads could undertake it — first from the north and then from the north-western fronts to the south-western front. This was the more necessary because our enemies in their turn, and more quickly than we, were transferring reserves into Austria from the Italian and Anglo-French fronts. The first reason of Brussiloff's attack had been attained. The Austrian advance into Italy was first of all checked and then Austria and Hungary began clearing out of Italian territory. This was the time when the Russian Army and the name of General Brussiloff reached such an extraordinary height in the estimation of all the Allies, particularly of the Italians.

Then the condition of Brussiloff's troops, still advancing, became more and more difficult. Not only all our reserves, but our fighting materials also, had to be sent to him as his were exhausted, though this hurt us very much in the armies of the other fronts. We understood that the Higher Command could not act otherwise. We recognised, however, that every departing army corps, every transferred thousand heavy or mortar shells, reduced the chances of our future success. There was no shortage at this time in light shells. We had to cut down our plans

for an advance as a curtailment was made in the plans for an advance on the north-western front. At the last minute General Evert decided to transfer it to a more southern direction, in the region of Baranowitchi. Under these conditions, it had no co-ordination with the operations on the northern front. The only connection would be that the Germans would be compelled to send their reserves in different directions, if the advances were made at the same time.

The transfer of the several army corps from the 5th Army naturally compelled a decrease in the scale of the future advance and even the transference of it to a more northern part of the Dvinsk salient. At the middle of July, Kuropatkin decided to make an advance with the 12th Army of General Ratko-Dmitrieff in a south-westerly direction. At first attacks on both fronts were successful, but they were in no way a surprise to the Germans, who consequently had no difficulty in parrying them. The battles continued for a couple of weeks, then died down, our troops being compelled to retreat almost to their starting-points. These operations clearly showed that we had not sufficient materials of all sorts to carry on operations on several fronts at one and the same time. On the other hand, the huge front we held and the tremendous number of army corps in our armies made it absolutely necessary for us to operate on several fronts simultaneously, because acting otherwise would have given the Germans an overwhelming superiority, through their advantage in railroads, for quick concentrations in one direction of all their reserves to stop our advance even if at first it were a successful one.

It must be remembered that our Allies, with their large resources in materials, only operated on one part of their

front at one and the same time, while we, on account of geographical conditions, had to distribute our forces, both of troops and material. Of course, in our advance we took into account the great size of our living forces, and utilised them to counterbalance our shortage in material resources. The event showed that such a calculation had no sufficient foundation. However excellent the living force was, however high its warlike spirit, nevertheless there existed a limit. One cannot under such conditions utilise living strength against dead materials. Moreover in course of time, as the operations draw out, the stock of moral force wears out, while the flow of material force, at any rate of our enemies, remains at the same level.

This circumstance affected Brussiloff's advance. It was inevitable that the troops should grow weary by the middle of summer, and although the advance continued it could not of course give the same brilliant results. In this way, the advance of Brussiloff's troops about the end of August nearly ceased. The reason lay, not so much in the shortage of reserves — because these reserves were sufficient to fill a part of the new Austro-Roumanian front, whereas this had been given to two armies — as in that misfortune that followed us from the very outset of the campaign, shortage in ammunition for the artillery, and particularly for the heavy guns.

Nevertheless, the weariness of the troops had its effect to a certain extent, but there can be no question that the stoppage of the advance was premature, and founded on orders from Headquarters, under a pretext which could not be openly spoken about, whereas, amongst our Allies, if not in the Press, such reasons were publicly mentioned or whispered.

I never could understand how it was that our Allies,

having at their disposal means, and more than we, even in tactical units, if we take units in proportion to the length of front, had one law for their advances and another law for our advances. The best proof that our Higher Command had no intention of prematurely stopping the advancing operations was that I was given the possibility to continue active operations in September and October, and further, as far as possible, they supplied me with ammunition more generously than they did the other armies, which had to stop their advance owing to the lack of fresh reserves.

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One of the consequences of the advance on the northern front was General Kuropatkin's removal from his command and his assignment to a post much more in keeping with the qualities of his intellectual powers and character — namely, the office of Governor-General of Turkestan. This transfer was caused by an outburst of disorders on the part of the native population of Sarts, as a protest against their being sent into the interior of Russia to be organised into bands of workmen. These people did not come under the conscription law. Kuropatkin left on the very shortest notice, and I was then instructed to go to Pskoff to take up the command of the northern front temporarily, until such time as somebody was chosen for the post. I had to fulfil these duties for two weeks.

Under instructions from Headquarters, I had to go to Riga, the 12th Army, and to the Port of Reval. At this time a new plan of an advance from the Riga salient was set on foot, and to combine this advance with the disembarkation of about two divisions of infantry on the shores of the Gulf of Riga. I had to come to the conclusion that

this place would be absolutely unfitted for our advance, but on the contrary would give our opponents a considerable advantage in defence. The unprofitable conditions would not be compensated by the advantages which a descent to the rear of the left German flank might give us, even if the Germans were surprised. It was sufficient to stay in Riga to know that no secret, especially one of such large proportions as the preparation of a descent in the two ports of Riga and Reval, could fail to leak out from the observations of the populace, which included too many elements sympathising with the Germans and sure to pass the secret over to our enemy. I reported the result of my observations to Headquarters, to General Alexeieff, sending to him a staff officer with a personal report.

In the middle of August the new Commander-in-Chief, General Russky, arrived in Pskoff. He had left this post in December 1915, owing to illness. His stay in the Caucasus evidently had completely cured him. With him arrived the new Chief of Staff, General Daniloff, the late Quartermaster-General to the Grand Duke Nicolai, and latterly, for about a year, commanding an army corps of the Army. Having placed my observations on the Riga front before General Russky, I returned to Dvinsk to my own army. At this time I was making preparations for a third advance, but of much smaller dimensions, as recently another army corps and part of the heavy artillery and also shell stocks were withdrawn, and transferred to the south. Whilst in the midst of these preparations, in the end of August, I received a telegram from General Alexeieff in which he informed me that the Emperor had chosen me for the command of the newly formed army which had before it a serious problem on the south-western front, and that in its composition was included the Imperial

Guard — two infantry and one Guards cavalry army corps. I was also given permission to use the Staff of the Guard, and was to take with me from the 5th Army any officers I thought necessary. General Alexeieff closed the telegram by asking if I was agreeable to take up the post. I replied that I had no right to refuse any service instructions in time of war. At the same time I pointed out the person to whom I asked to be allowed to hand over my command of the 5th Army until the arrival of the person selected by Headquarters.

The permission to take with me whom I pleased from the Staff naturally aroused the desire to be accompanied by my closest assistant, the Chief of Staff, Major-General Miller, and also the Quartermaster, Major-General Alexeieff, who several months earlier had been my Chief of Staff in the 6th Army Corps. But, on the other hand, I could not but understand the impossibility of taking both of these with me when I left, especially General Miller, who had been the Chief of Staff of the 5th Army from the beginning of the war. I consider General Miller pre-eminent in capacity to execute the higher duties that belong to officers of the General Staff. That he got no promotion during the whole of the campaign was because his presence on the Army Staff gave the assurance to the High Command that everything was in good hands, and that Pleve himself could give full attention to commanding the Army. But, acknowledging all the injustice of this attitude towards General Miller, I promised to give him the command of an army corps, which would open the way for further promotion in the service. Remembering what help he had given me in the first days of taking up the command of the 5th Army, I thought it not quite right to deprive my successor of the same advantage. It was only

very much later, when I was temporary Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, that I was able to offer General Miler the command of an army corps on the south-west front. Circumstances connected with the Revolution compelled him in May 1917 to resign this duty, and in August the Temporary Government sent him as head of the war mission to Italy, where for several years prior to the war he had been Military Attaché.

When General Sluysarenko arrived — the same general who commanded the 2nd Army Corps when my 1st Cavalry Division defended the flank of the 1st Army, in which was his army corps, from a turning of a German column — I handed over the command of the 5th Army, and gave my substitute all the dispositions. I immediately left for Mohileff, where I could see General Alexeieff. From him I learnt that the Guards detachment had been moved in support of the 8th Army under General Kaledin, who in May had brilliantly taken the town of Lutsk.

Thanks to the addition to the Guards of several army corps, there was a full army now, but the action of the Guards commander had not satisfied Headquarters, and his temporary command had not been confirmed. On Alexeieff's recommendation the Emperor had agreed to my being appointed to this region for the formation of a new army, which was to be called " the Special Army." I made no direct question, but I think that this name was not so much given because it included the Guards detachments as because they did not wish to give it the number 13.

Making inquiries by telephone, General Alexeieff ascertained that the Emperor had driven off somewhere and would only return in time for dinner, and that I should arrive at that time at the house where the Emperor lived. The Headquarters, just before the Grand Duke resigned,

moved from Baranowitchi to the Government town of Mohileff. The Grand Duke had lived in the Governor's house, which stood on the high banks of the Dnieper, with a large garden sloping to the river bank. The Headquarters Staff lived in the Government Office building which was alongside. The buildings have become historical now.

Arriving at the appointed time, I met several of the suite in the waiting-room. They always dined at the Imperial table along with all the senior officers of the Foreign Missions, amongst which I had already met Count Rikkel, the head of the Belgian mission. He came to me in the spring of 1915, when he arrived with a Belgian general from the Belgian front, when I was commanding an army corps defending the line of the Bzura. The senior English officer was General Waters, who temporarily held the post while General Sir John Hanbury Williams was away on leave. I had first met General Waters in Manchuria, where at one time he was with the Staff of the 1st Siberian Army Corps under General Baron Shtakelberg and where I was temporarily Chief of Staff. Well do I remember Waters, a colonel at the time of the Wafangou fight. I remember that he expressed hearty sympathy for Russia and the Russian troops, not regarding the fact that England was then allied to our enemies. I remember how he expressed sincere sorrow that the fight at Wafangou, which commenced so brilliantly for us, ended in Shtakelberg's troops making a general retreat. Since that time we never met again, as he went to Kuropatkin's Staff where I seldom went, and my fate took me from the extreme right to the extreme left of the Manchurian Army.

CHAPTER XV

AT GENERAL HEADQUARTERS IN MOHILEFF — ENTRY OF ROUMANIA

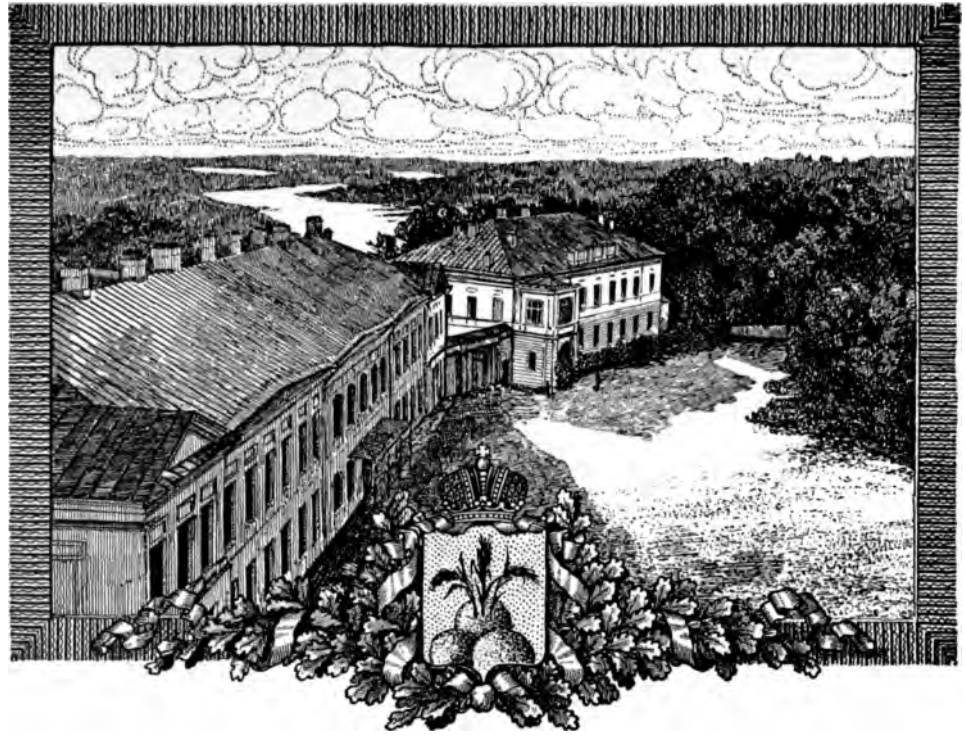
THE Staff of the Generalissimo, the so-called "Stafka" (which means in ancient Russian "camp," especially the military camp of a Chief) established itself at Mohileff in the autumn of 1915, when the Grand Duke Nicolai was still the Commander-in-Chief. The removal of the Grand Duke and the taking over by the Emperor of the duties of Commander-in-Chief were little expected by the Army, and though for a long time rumours had been circulated that the Tsar intended to take the command, little credence was given to these statements. Naturally when it became an accomplished fact, the causes for it were commented upon on every side, but the real cause of it was unknown.

One can suppose that in this case, as in the majority of big events, the change appeared to be the result of a combination of different causes, the principal of which was dissatisfaction as to the direction of military operations and especially the want of experience and knowledge in some of the closest helpers of the Grand Duke, with whom he would not part. But, in addition to this, several of those people familiar with the Court asserted that it was the result of the influence of some of the people nearest to the Emperor, who wanted to be in closer touch with the immediate direction of military operations, hoping that on them too would be reflected some of the glory of the military success. And besides this, their principal argu-

ment was that in taking over the supreme command himself, the Tsar would increase his prestige and deepen the love of the people and army, and it was pointed out that in many kingdoms taking part in the great European War the monarchs stood at the head of their armed forces. It was hinted that it had not happened without the influence of the Empress Alexandra. She was considered a domineering and ambitious woman who calculated that if her husband were absorbed wholly in military affairs he would probably give her, if not the entire control of Imperial affairs, in any case a greater influence over them.

All these, of course, were more or less probable reasons; so far as I know, His Majesty did not announce to anybody his real motives for the decision he had taken, but one must remember that in the beginning of the war it was openly declared that the nomination of the Grand Duke was only temporary.

With the arrival of the Emperor at Mohileff, the daily life of the General Headquarters was little altered; only the people of the immediate suite of the Generalissimo were changed, as the officers composing the suite of the Grand Duke Nicolai all left together for the Caucasus. With the Emperor came his entourage. The whole Staff suffered no untoward change in its personnel, as General Alexeieff entered upon his duties as Chief of the Headquarters Staff shortly before this, when the change in the Supreme Command was probably already decided upon. The Tsar, on his arrival at Headquarters, occupied the residence lately used by the Grand Duke. This building was so small that when the Empress with her daughters came to Mohileff they lived in the train, passing only a part of the day at the Governor's house. The Imperial suite was comparatively small, and the number of people



MOHILEFF: HOUSE OCCUPIED BY HIS MAJESTY (ON THE RIGHT) AND BY HEADQUARTERS (ON THE LEFT) AT THE STAFKA

not belonging to the General Staff was only ten to twelve, without counting three people exclusively occupied with the Tsarevitch as tutors. The Tsarevitch lived with his father nearly all the time at the Headquarters, and used to accompany him in his visits to the troops. The Tsarevitch used to spend the whole of his spare time with his father when the latter was free from his army duties, and even slept in the same room with him, using only simple camp beds.

Among the members of the suite, mention must be made of the elderly Count Frederiks, the Minister of the Court, and Chief of the Imperial Headquarters on the civil side, a man of dignified bearing with great personal charm and affability of manner. Count Frederiks came of an old Swedish family. There was an established opinion that he took no part in the Court intrigues, and his personal influence over the Emperor was not exerted at all for his own interests. His assistant as Chief of the Tsar's Headquarters was General Voeikoff. Though married to the daughter of Count Frederiks, he was far from enjoying the favour of his father-in-law. Words are quoted which were supposed to have been said by Count Frederiks — "Here everyone intrigues, and most of all my son-in-law." About General Voeikoff an opinion was formed that he had great influence over the Tsar, but I could not say if it was justified, as I never had proof of it. The Master of the Household, the person whose duties lay in the direction of the affairs of the Household of the Court, was the comparatively young Major-General, Prince Dolgorouky. As was known to me, he busied himself exclusively with his work, and was very much liked by the Tsar, but I never heard that he took advantage of the influence he possessed over the Emperor.

The Chief of the personal Imperial Guard was General Count Grabbe. It was said of him that by his natural tact, greatly surpassing his inborn mental capacities, he kept himself wonderfully clear of the influences of the different parties and was appreciated by those who intrigued, as he did not interfere with their plans, and also by those who stood aside, because he did not intrigue in spite of his intimacy with the Tsar. The Tsar greatly appreciated his abstinence from everything that did not concern him. Besides these people, there were always aides-de-camp, some of them permanent, others coming only for a spell of duty.

The working day of the Emperor began at ten in the morning, without counting the time he spent in his cabinet for business. At this hour His Majesty passed to the neighbouring building, occupied by his Staff, and there the Chief of the Headquarters, General Alexeieff, in the presence of the Quartermaster-General, reported to him, by reading the daily accounts of all the fourteen armies and of the four fronts. The Quartermaster-General, on the already-noted plans of a large scale, showed the position of the armies and the place of the inhabited and geographical points. Then the Chief of the Staff reported to the Tsar the instructions which were to be given and received for approval. After this report, which was purely strategical, the Quartermaster-General left, and the Chief of Staff made reports concerning all the other questions which affected the military operations, as for instance great questions regarding the basis of the general position of affairs and also important questions concerning internal and external politics as they might influence the course of military events. The greater part of the smaller problems, which really only required the formal sanction of the

Highest Authority, were sent to the Tsar's residence as written reports. The verbal reports lasted almost till the luncheon hour, which was appointed for half-past twelve. To this was invited the greater part of the higher military ranks who came to the Army Headquarters on their private or official affairs, and who wished to be introduced to the Tsar. All high ranks of foreign missions were invited. The places at table which remained empty — there being accommodation for about forty — were occupied by the people of His Majesty's suite. During lunch the Tsarevitch always sat on the left hand of his father. The place allotted to Chief of the Staff, General Alexeieff, was on the Tsar's right hand, but he usually excused himself, only coming to the Tsar's table every other day for lunch; on the other days and for dinner he went to the Staff Officers' mess, as it gave him the opportunity of having intercourse with the people subordinate to him, whom of course he would very seldom otherwise see, and also to see at the table people coming to the General Headquarters for business and conversation to whom he otherwise would have had to give his precious time.

After lunch everyone went into the next room, when the Tsar, passing from one to another, talked to those with whom he had no opportunity of speaking at the table, and who came to the General Headquarters to be introduced to him. After this reception, he received Ministers and other people who came from Petrograd, although rarely more than one or two. These reports lasted until three o'clock, and if they were not finished by then the Ministers were readmitted at six o'clock till dinner time, and, in exceptional cases, even after dinner. From three to five every afternoon the Emperor, with the Tsarevitch and with some persons of his suite, went in motors out of

the town and afterwards generally took an hour's walk in the forest or in the fields.

For dinner a smaller number of people was generally invited, but the heads of the foreign missions were present. The Tsarevitch was not present at dinner, as he dined a little earlier and went to bed early. Once a week a cinematograph performance was given in the theatre of the town from six o'clock to half-past seven, chiefly for the Tsarevitch. To this performance were invited all ranks of the General Staff; the top rows in the theatre were occupied by the lower ranks of the St. George Battalion and clerks of the Staff. This was the only distraction at the "Stafka."

On Sundays the reports began an hour later, as the Tsar was present at Mass. In winter, during the calm, the Emperor visited the front, inspecting the troops who were resting. During these tours he was usually accompanied by the Tsarevitch and by the persons of his suite, but General Alexeieff always stayed at the "Stafka."

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Some time after my coming to the reception-room where were already assembled those people invited to the Emperor's table, his personal attendant came from the Tsar's cabinet asking me to come and see the Tsar. After some words of greeting the Tsar told me that his choice had fallen on me for the command of the Special Army, in order that the command of the Guards, of these select Russian troops, should be given into efficient hands. The Tsar said that he regretted that the Guards, being as they were such a powerful force, when it was necessary to accomplish an energetic advance were seldom used cautiously enough, and suffered big losses without bringing corresponding advantages. I told the Tsar that I fully shared his

opinion; that if on one hand the care which was bestowed on the Guards gave the right to require at the necessary moment that they should repay it to their Tsar and country on the field of battle by self-denying work, then, on the other hand, it was necessary to consider that in the Guards was gathered the flower of Russian manhood, and that on account of this it was necessary to take an advantage only when the results would correspond to the sacrifices made. In a word, "Who receives much, gives much."

Our conversation lasted rather long, and probably the Emperor's cooks were afraid that their meals would be over-cooked.

It is necessary to say that the Tsar's table was very modest and was not distinguished by its abundance. In general it reminded one more of a good and wholesome family table. Twice a week no meat was served. After dinner, I went to General Alexeieff to continue our conversation. During the time we were talking together, about ten o'clock at night, General Alexeieff's private secretary came and reported that the Tsar was on the stairs, probably wishing to see the Chief of Staff. General Alexeieff went to meet the Tsar, and in half a minute they both entered the room. Coming in, the Tsar said he was convinced that I had not finished my conversation with General Alexeieff, and that he wanted to discuss what was the best rôle to be played by the Special Army, especially by the two corps of the Guards. I answered that it would probably be necessary to make some change in the groundwork of the proposals which were sent from the front, and it could only be done after acquaintance with the conditions on the spot. After being with us about half an hour, the Tsar returned home accompanied by Alexeieff.

That same night I left via Kieff, and on the second day

arrived at the station of Rojitche, which was ten kilometres from Lutsk, where in the only houses which were not ruined, belonging to the Jewish population, was established the Staff detachments of the Guards. The town itself, situated at a distance of two kilometres, was composed entirely of ruins. Here in July the advance of the 8th Army of General Kaledin had taken place, the result being the capture of the town and its environs with much military booty. Fortunately Lutsk itself did not suffer any great devastation, and the big building of the Catholic Seminary of the sixteenth century, which was the palace of the Catholic Bishops, remained untouched. I was met at the station by the Chief of Staff of the Guards, Count Ignatieff, brother of the Minister of Public Education and the son of our Minister in Constantinople before the Turko-Russian War. From him I learnt that General Bezobrazoff, who was formerly the Commander of the Guards, on hearing of the reorganisation of this detachment and the formation of the new Special Army which was not to be under his command, left Rojitche and went to Headquarters. He had handed over his duties to his second in command, the commander of the 1st Corps of Guards, the Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovitch. With me, as stated before, came Major-General Alexeieff, who was to take the post of Chief of the Staff of this army. I always thought that to carry out successfully the duties of a Chief of an army staff it was necessary, above all things, to be thoroughly experienced in the work, and that also the person chosen should be intimately acquainted with the Chief with whom he would have to work. I frankly told Count Ignatieff that, in spite of all his qualities as a soldier and a man, he was unable to undertake this post; after passing the Academy of the General Staff, he had served in the ranks,

and only during the war had he occupied a post on the Staff. Certainly everyone could learn, but it was necessary to avoid learning when it might be paid for with human lives.

Directly we began our duties, Major-General Alexeieff and I threw ourselves into the work. Having given instructions generally concerning the re-formation of the Staff and the organisation of the work, I departed for an inspection of the troops and to acquaint myself with the area where the advance was to be made and in which the corps of the Guards were to play an important part. But unfortunately, here and in many other cases was revealed the want of direction, and by this the failure to adopt the new ideas with regard to the defending and attacking of positions. The inspection of the sector which was chosen for the advance showed that it offered to the enemy too many advantages of defence. This was due to the fact that after our previous rapid advance the Austro-Germans remained in chosen positions, not only very well fortified, but excellently adapted to the country. Besides this, it was evident that in any case our advance could be on a comparatively small scale, about ten kilometres, after which the ground was so muddy that it was impossible to conduct serious operations. There we should come upon the so-called Kovel swamps. Mature consideration of this convinced me that the projected advance would not give any chance of success, and unwillingly we had to renounce this plan.

At this time the Staff of the 8th Army of General Kaledin was established in Lutsk. On the first free day I visited Kaledin in order to learn what were his intentions and how to arrange our military activity. Kaledin told me in conversation that he, like myself, had to make preparations for the coming operations, and that his re-

sources in troops and artillery were by no means sufficient for the great attack which was projected; that after his quick advance, in June and July, the enemy considerably fortified their front positions, equalling him in force and even surpassing him with regard to artillery.

Having exchanged opinions we left and promised to have, as often as possible, personal meetings, which greatly helped the arrangement of our activities to our mutual convenience. Soon afterwards my surmises about the futility of the intended advance, in the sector chosen, were confirmed by the High Command, and it was proposed to try another place in a more suitable sector. But soon came instructions from General Brussiloff, the Commander-in-Chief of the south-western front, that he had decided to attack the enemy with the help of the 8th Army, with a view to obtaining greater results. For this two infantry corps of Guards had to be transferred to the east of Lutsk and given over to the command of General Kaledin. These corps accomplished their passage from one army to another in the beginning of September. At the same time two flank corps from the army of Kaledin came to join my command. It was said that in case of the success of the 8th Army I ought to develop this success by the activity of my left flank, which was close to the front of the coming attack. However, as the attack of the 8th Army in the middle of September did not give the expected results, I did not take part in the development of the operations.

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At this stage, on the extreme left flank of the whole Russian front, new and important events were developing. In August 1916 the armies fighting the Central Powers were joined by Roumania after her long hesitation

as to what course she should take. In time history will explain why, after this hesitation, Roumania joined in at the moment most unfavourable for her and the Allies. As was known to me, the Russian Government tried to persuade Roumania to enter the war in June, at the time when General Brussiloff's advance across the Carpathians was in full swing, and it was possible to count that for one or two months yet the Russian Army would have sufficient reserves and materials for the continuation of an energetic advance. But this chance was missed by Roumania; her troops took the field only in the last days of August, during the time when the advance of General Brussiloff was gradually dying away. Besides the insufficiency of reserves and munitions, the fatigue of the army, which during three months was under the great strain of incessant fighting, began to become evident. At the same time General Alexeieff showed the Roumanian Government that the length of their frontier did not permit of the possibility of their own troops defending it all from enemy invasion and also did not permit an advance on the whole front. For that purpose it was necessary to transfer the Russian troops to Transylvania, which was then thinly occupied by the Austrians and to recall the Roumanian troops holding the extreme eastern part of the province of Wallachia close to the Serbian border, to the line of defence on a meridian a little to the East of Bukarest; both these measures were designed to shorten the Roumanian fighting line and to free a part of the Roumanian troops for the offensive in the chosen direction. However, Roumania did not take advantage of either course, but began by an invasion on a large front, along the whole length of her frontier. It is difficult to say how far it was right, but it was affirmed that the Roumanian Government did not

want to consent to the Russian plans for the occupation of Transylvania because it was feared that this temporary occupation would change into a permanent one. Generally at this time the Allies " divided the skin of a bear they had not yet killed." Already an agreement had been made between Russia and Roumania by virtue of which a part of Bukovina with the town of Tchernovitz, at this time really occupied by us, was to pass under Roumanian dominions. Simultaneously was also defined which Austrian provinces with a Roumanian population were, after the treaty of peace, to form a part of Roumania!

As is known, the first advance of the Roumanian troops was successful, as in the Transvlyania there were almost no Austrian troops. This was probably because the Central Powers continued to hope that Roumania would remain neutral. Scarcely two weeks had passed before the Austro-Germans, gathering their forces, stopped the Roumanian advance, and soon afterwards themselves began a general offensive. About this time it was the general opinion that Roumania was counting upon the neutrality of Bulgaria. With the entry of the Bulgars, not only did the lines of the Roumanian Army become longer and the danger to the Dobroudja greater, but there was a possibility of the Bulgarian troops crossing the Danube. Then naturally they had to revert to the idea of General Alexeieff and to occupy a part of the Roumanian frontier, turned to the west, with Russian troops. But this necessitated the lengthening of our front. The poverty of the Roumanian railways, like those of ours which were close to Moldavia, did not present a chance of counting on the successful transfer of the troops by this means. We had, little by little, to transfer to the south the left flank of the Russian Army, and thus gradually replace the Roumanian

troops. This task was allotted to the left flank of the 9th Army under General Lechitzky. Between the 11th and 9th Armies it was decided to place the 8th Army. For this purpose only the staff of General Kaledin was transferred to the region of Tchernovitz, and to his command was given a part of the troops already there who had come from the different parts of the Russian front. In the middle of September this Order was received, and within twenty-four hours I took command of all the corps of the 8th Army, together with all the corps of my own army, amongst which were two corps of cavalry. From this moment the "Special Army" became really Special, not only because it was composed of troops of the Guards, but also because of its unusual size, having fourteen army corps. Especially difficult was the work of my Staff, which had still to form the different bases, to deal directly with the different military detachments and organisations which were under its command.

During the first part of September the advancing operations of General Brussiloff were slowly ceasing. This was caused, as was explained before, partly by the exhaustion of the reserves of these armies as well as of those on the other fronts. It had been found necessary to send the remaining reserves from other fronts to lengthen the left wing of the Russian Army on the Roumanian frontier. But the principal cause of our reduced activity was the deficiency in artillery munitions, which were as much exhausted by Brussiloff's attacks as by secondary operations in the Riga and Baranowitchi sectors. In time the enemy so strengthened himself that in certain places he could concentrate sufficient reserves to paralyse our attacks even although they were successful in the beginning. But at the same period the whole stoppage of the offensive

on our part might have been taken advantage of by the Germans to transfer these reserves from Galicia to Transylvania, whence they could travel by railway sooner than our troops could by foot.

The danger lay in the seizure of the mountain passes of the Transylvanian Carpathians and the invasion of the Austro-Germans into Roumanian territory to surround our left flank. At this stage the greatest concentration of the German troops was prepared against the Special Army, and for that reason it was imperative for me to continue active operations. Our reconnaissances had fixed the number of German divisions on this comparatively small front at twenty-three. Knowing this, I proposed to General Brussiloff that I should continue the attacks only if they would give me a corresponding quantity of munitions — realising as I did how difficult it was to break the resistance of twenty-three German divisions. I proposed to undertake the preparation of the artillery on a front of about fifteen kilometres of three corps and from time to time to accompany it with infantry attacks. However, the whole of the artillery on my front, which was about 150 kilometres in extent, was not to be moved from its place, because the guns were to work more for the preparation of the advance than for the infantry, and I did not have sufficient artillery at my command even to enable it to rest during the necessary transfer from the front to the rear of my lines.

The three staffs of the corps were also unchanged, and took part in the advance. During September and October these advances were not less than five in number. Some of them, in order to preserve the infantry forces, were limited only to artillery preparation, and this was stopped by the rainy and stormy weather.

During this time nearly all divisions took part in the attacks and much blood was shed on both sides. But before half of their effective force was lost they were sent into reserve in order that they might be quickly reinforced. Towards the end of October, the whole of the artillery and infantry were mixed and fresh regrouping was necessary for normal reorganisation of the army corps. But the main object was accomplished: the Germans were unable to take away their divisions from my sector; they were even compelled to reinforce them with fresh troops. Our troops meanwhile occupied their appointed positions in Transylvania and prevented the access of the Austro-Germans to Moldavia.

From thence onward the withdrawal of the corps of the Special Army began, but on account of the extended front the number left could not be less than nine. My principal assistant in directing the advancing operations was General Korniloff, who came to me as commander of the 25th Army Corps in the middle of September, after his escape from captivity in Austria.

CHAPTER XVI

GENERAL KORNILOFF — MY APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF THE STAFF

KORNILOFF succeeded in escaping from his captivity, as happens generally in such cases, owing to the audacity and coolness which he displayed. He was taken prisoner in the summer of 1915, during the retreat of the south-western army from Galician territory, when he, in order to secure the safe, uninterrupted retreat of the corps, in which he commanded a division, maintained an obstinate fight, remaining with a comparatively small rear-guard. The corps succeeded in escaping from the difficult position, but at the price of the capture of the rear-guard, including General Korniloff himself.

He had to prepare his escape little by little, so as not to arouse the suspicion of the Austrians, who kept him under strict supervision. He intentionally behaved so rudely to the Austrian authorities that they in time began to avoid immediate relations with him. When everything was ready for the escape, he was secretly supplied with the uniform of a common soldier of the Austrian Army. Korniloff pretended to be ill, but the doctor who came to see him was received so curtly that he did not renew his visit. Then came the moment for the escape. His orderly, a Russian soldier, was of course in the plot, and after Korniloff's disappearance continued to assert that his General was ill, and did not want to see anybody. Meanwhile, Korniloff, in the uniform of an Austrian soldier, was

going by train in the direction of the Roumanian frontier. There was a dangerous moment when Korniloff was leaving the building in which he was confined, but the Austrian sentry evidently took him for a comrade, and did not even challenge him when he was leaving the enclosure and, as he passed, asked the sentry to light his cigarette.

When he had arrived close to the Roumanian frontier, Korniloff thought it wiser to leave the train and continue his journey on foot, making use of a compass and a map which he had taken care to procure. The most difficult part of his scheme had not yet come. It was essential to avoid any dangerous meeting, and for that it was necessary to keep clear of inhabited places. He was obliged to support himself upon what he could find in the fields. On the third night he decided to approach some shepherds, who appeared to be Austro-Roumanians. He described himself as a deserter, and received from them the necessary information as to how to get to the Roumanian frontier, in avoiding the Austrian troops. Next day he found himself in Roumania among friends, who helped him to return to Russia.

On reaching me, Korniloff received the command of the 25th Army Corps, already preparing to take a most active part in the coming operations. He threw himself into this work with extraordinary energy; but he had to learn much himself, as during the year of his imprisonment, the process of arranging the positions of the fighting line and the methods of offence had made great progress. For this I had often to visit his corps, examining the positions with him, in order to give the necessary instructions. Here I had full opportunity of appreciating the attainments of this remarkable personality. One of the peculiarities of strong characters is that they never refuse an opportunity of learn-

ing something, adopting some new idea, perceiving at once in what measure the new is rational and useful. At this time I realised that Korniloff was a splendid man of action, able to show, in measure as it was required, the necessary personal initiative. If one adds to this his extraordinary energy, his just, soldier-like opinions, his great austerity in relation to himself, which gave him the right of behaving severely and of being exacting with his subordinates, then one can depict the personality of this man for whom fate prepared such an eminent rôle during the time of the Russian Revolution.

In addition to this, the distinctive trait of Korniloff is his personal courage — which quality so strongly influences the troops under a chief. But this does not prevent him from adopting the wise and soldier-like principles with which every commanding officer ought to guide himself. Napoleon expresses this in these words: "Se prodiguer à la reconnaissance, se ménager à la bataille" ("Not to spare oneself during reconnoitring, but to save oneself during the battle"). And, in fact, during the period of preparation Korniloff personally inspected his positions, appeared in the most dangerous places among his troops, but during the battle he never left his post of command, from which he could communicate constantly with his subordinates and with myself.

Korniloff's appearance is not less characteristic. By birth a Cossack from beyond the Balkans, undoubtedly one of his ancestors was of *Bouriat, i.e.* of Mongol, origin. His prominent cheek-bones, his piercing, slanting eyes, his skin of light olive tint, are clear evidence of this.

For nearly a month and a half the operations of advance lasted, alternating with periods of calm. After this preparations again began for infantry attacks. In almost

all of these, although operating with different divisions, General Korniloff and his staff took part. At the beginning of November, as I said before, our position on the Transylvanian frontier was fully strengthened. I considered the task which I intended to carry out — the holding of German troops on my front — finished, and I asked the permission of General Brussiloff to stop the attacks, to withdraw the greater part of the divisions as a reserve, and to begin to prepare troops for the spring offensives. But it was by no means intended to stop the military operations. At the front of the Army, to every commander of a corps it was proposed to allot a small district — in preference where the enemy was not farther than some 100 paces — and from time to time to provoke close fighting in trenches, especially using trench mortars instead of artillery, and hand-grenades instead of bayonets. These districts had to be also a fighting-school for the divisions of the corps.

At this time the Germans showed very little activity, sending only clouds of asphyxiating gases accompanied by the firing of shells containing chemicals. As in December 1914, regiments of the 6th Corps were the first to experience the effects of the firing of chemical shells, so also in the middle of May 1915, almost on the eve of the departure of my corps to the reserve, and its consequent dispatch to Galicia, one of my regiments, together with its neighbours, the Siberians, were the first to come under the effects of the gas wave, although the regiment of my corps was caught only by the end of the gas. The attack itself was led by the Germans against the neighbouring Siberian regiments of the 6th Siberian Corps. This gas attack, being the first, caused us a great loss in men, and one of the Siberian Regiments, moved up from the reserve to help

the attacked region, especially suffered. The number of gas masks then was only sufficient to supply the troops in the front lines. The gas wave was so strong that its effect, though naturally in a weaker degree, was felt in the direction of the General Staff of the Second Army at Grodisko, a distance of thirty kilometres from the place where the gas was sent. But, as in the first case of shelling with chemical substances, so also in this, the Germans had no success, because in the final result in both cases they were forced back to their positions by counter-attacks. From this time onward the troops under my command more than once experienced the effects of the gas wave, but I cannot point out any case in which, after the so-called "gas attack," the Germans had any success in their advance.

Then, more than once, it was reported from the front lines that the projected gas cloud, owing to the caprices of the air currents, did not reach our lines, but returned to the Germans and, still worse for them, passed along their lines. This invariably resulted in the German soldiers escaping from the trenches, under heavy fire from our artillery.

In time the Germans came to the conclusion themselves that the gas attacks were of very little advantage to them, and in 1917 we heard no more of them. I do not think that the gas waves which we sent were more successful, but the shelling with the chemical substances was another matter. As exclusive means of fighting, especially for shelling the front lines, they probably never gave results which the Germans expected. But as an auxiliary in leading artillery preparation for an attack in order to paralyse the hostile batteries, in the course of time they began to obtain greater importance and wider use. But every stick has two ends, says a Russian proverb, and if the chemical

shells helped the Germans, so, by and by, when we and our Allies began to adopt them, they caused also a great deal of damage to the Germans. In general, every new invention tending to a more perfect method of destroying the enemy gives a real advantage only so long as the adversary has not equally adopted it. But the chemical gases applied as a wave had not even this nature, as they often brought more harm to the inventors; and not only when the wave turned on those who sent it, but also when it enveloped the enemy trenches. German troops sent to the attack entering the zone infected by the gas wave considered themselves victorious, and entered the captured trenches, which were full of gas. They, therefore, inhaled the air with all the greater force, because of the rapid advance, and in spite of their gas masks did not gain so much as they suffered from the effect of their own gases. This may explain the comparative ease with which we succeeded in the counter-attacks after the German offensive.

The calm gave me the opportunity of making frequent tours of the corps and the front lines. On November 19th I was first able to visit my extreme left flank, the 5th Corps of which, owing to their distance, did not participate in the active operations of the attack in the months of September and October. For this particular tour I had to leave Headquarters for two days. The district of the 5th Corps interested me, as I had planned a part of its disposition for the future spring active operations. I also wished to become better acquainted with the commander of the corps, General Baloueff, with whom I had not come into contact.

On the second day of my stay, having returned from the front lines to the Headquarters of the corps and having

talked by telephone with my Chief of the Staff, Major-General Alexeieff, and having learned that for the moment he did not need my interference, General Baloueff, I, and the officers who accompanied us during the inspection sat at the dinner, or supper, which was prepared. But I had not finished my plate of soup when I was told that my Chief of the Staff wished me to come to the telephone. It was clear that he had something of importance to tell me. What he did say was quite unexpected. His message was that a telegram had been received for me, not even in cipher, with the signature "Nicolai." It said that owing to the illness of General Alexeieff, who needed a long rest, the choice of His Majesty had fallen upon me to execute *par interim* the duties of Chief of the General Staff. I informed Major General Alexeieff that in an hour's time I would leave for my Headquarters.

I finished my dinner, told General Baloueff what had happened and asked him to dispatch my answer to the Emperor. I intimated that I had received the Tsar's telegram; that I was at the time on the further flanks of my army; that I was leaving immediately for my headquarters and asked permission to give the command of the Special Army to General Baloueff. In twenty-four hours I counted upon leaving for my destination. I informed General Baloueff of my decision to hand over to him the command of the Special Army for the indefinite period of my absence. This decision was in reality the result of chance. If I had received the Tsar's telegram two days earlier I could never have made such a decision. I did not know General Baloueff well enough, and, besides, he was not the senior among my corps commanders. But all that I saw in his corps, his will and persevering energy, the personal carrying-out of all my numerous, complicated,

and difficult military commands, and the sensible measures which he adopted in developing them, disposed me in his favour. These hazards that play not only with the fate of the individual man, but also reflect on the fate of hundreds of thousands of people depending upon him — are they really simple hazard? War and its chances develop fatalism in people, and fatalism in its turn reconciles us with those so-called hazards in our life.

Having given to the Chief of my Staff the necessary instructions, I received an inquiry from the General Headquarters asking whether I desired to go to Mohileff by an express train or by an ordinary one. On the way I intended to call at Berditcheff, where General Brussiloff was staying, as I understood that of all the commanders at the fronts I should have to deal with him the most. Already the inequality of the Roumanian fight with the Austro-Germans was becoming apparent, and it was clear that we should have to come to her help.

As I was leaving for an indefinite time I wanted to say good-bye to my wife, who then worked as a Sister of Charity in the dressing detachment of the corps of General Korniloff. Her presence in the army detachments needs some explanation. When the Balkan War concluded in so unexpected a manner in the winter of 1911–12, my wife — we lived at this time at Moscow — came to the conclusion that this was only the prelude to a future European War. As a result of her provision, she took an eight-months' course of training next winter so that at the outbreak of war operations she should have at once the right to engage herself as a Sister of Charity. In the spring of 1912 she had for the first time in her life, though already of mature age, to pass an examination and to endure emotions which are generally associated with one's young days.

Holding the diploma of a Sister of Charity in the early days of August, she was able to accompany the 1st Army of General Rennenkampf, and could be nominated to a divisional hospital. She made only one condition — that they would not send any other sister there. However, the work of the divisional hospital did not satisfy her. She asked to be transferred, and she worked during the periods of fighting in the nearest divisional dressing station.

I cannot say that it helped her to get news from me. During the greater part of the war she was cut off from me by such great distances, that it made not only personal meetings but postal communication very difficult, sometimes impossible.

After some months she succeeded in being transferred to a divisional dressing detachment somewhere near me, but soon afterwards I was again moved on. Nevertheless, our rare meetings brought me a considerable share of help. From her I could always learn the good and bad points of the regulations and organisation for the treatment of the wounded. This enabled me to issue necessary instructions, dealing with infringements of the rules and other abuses, concerning reports on sanitary and medical matters, and as her duties during the whole time were in direct connection with the front line, where first aid must be given to the wounded, and where carelessness and untrustworthiness may wreak the most irreparable damage, I could naturally pay great attention to these matters among the troops which were under me. It was the easier because my wife, during the three years of war, had been in at least ten medical establishments. During this time fate led her into those institutions which distinguished themselves for rather bad qualities of order and organisa-

tion, but it also took her into contact with chiefs and doctors who gave their whole souls to the work of helping the wounded.

For instance, during the retreat of the 64th Division of the 24th Corps in the Augustoff Woods, which might have ended in the complete encircling of the corps, she saw medical men so busy taking care of themselves as to forget that they were required for the help of the wounded, even if they were in a most difficult and dangerous position. In Galicia, on the other hand, she could observe how, under the most difficult conditions, living in dug-outs and half-ruined buildings, the doctors could comply with the most severe aseptic and surgical requirements; how they could give surgical help in the cases of wounds which demanded immediate attention, and, under active artillery fire, could have a dressing station corresponding to the strictest requirements of modern surgery. At this time, as always, she was the only sister in the dressing detachment of the division which was under the direction of the well-known Karkoff surgeon, Strounnikoff.

As I was commanded to go to the front, we had to part again for an indefinite time, for she would not leave her work in the divisional dressing attachment of Korniloff's corps. Delayed by bad roads, she arrived at Lutsk just before my departure, and during the last few hours there I did not see her at all. I was busy giving orders concerning the programme of the work of the action of the troops for the approaching winter period. In view of this there was nothing for me to do but to take her with me to Mohileff, especially as the carriage which was taking me there at once had to return to Lutsk. During the journey, naturally, I was able to devote some time to her.

On my leaving Lutsk I took with me my adjutant who had been with me from the beginning of the campaign, Captain Arngold, and the second adjutant, Captain Arapoff.

I stayed for some hours in Berditcheff at General Brussiloff's and in about twenty-four hours I was in Kieff. There, while awaiting the departure of the train to Mohileff, I learnt that the train alongside mine was that of the Grand Duke Nicolai, who had just arrived from the General Headquarters, and was that night going back to his home at Tiflis. I sent at once to his train one of my adjutants, and learnt that he had gone to visit the patronal saints of Kieff, and afterwards that he would probably dine with the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna, and was expected to return towards evening. Having finished my business in the town and returned in the evening to my train, I learnt that the Grand Duke had several times sent to inquire if I had come back. There remained an hour and a half before the departure of our trains in different directions, and I passed the time in animated conversation with the Grand Duke.

Until this time, although I had had the opportunity of seeing the Grand Duke in an official capacity, I had never had an unrestrained conversation with him. I had even reason to suppose that I did not belong to those whose intimacy he desired. But here I met a man extremely affable and frank, fully approving my selection as a successor to General Alexeieff. From the Grand Duke I first learnt that the illness of Alexeieff was very grave, that the serious danger was not over, and that a relapse might be fatal. From his words I understood that with such a sad alternative my temporary nomination might become permanent. I am bound to say that such an alternative troubled rather than pleased me. During our conversa-

tion the Grand Duke touched on the personality of the Emperor and told me that the opinion circulated by the crowd did not give a proper impression of the man. The Grand Duke advised me to be fully frank with the Tsar in all things, and not to hide the reality with an idea of sparing him grief. To that I could only reply that this advice fully coincided with my character and principles. I parted from the Grand Duke with a warm embrace, and he assured me that he would in all cases be ready to give me as far as possible, in the limits of his power, every help and co-operation, and then again, as in the beginning of our conversation, he mentioned that my dead father, Field-Marshal Gourko, was very friendly with his own father. Soon our trains took each of us to his destination, him to his familiar work, governing the troops and land of the Caucasus, myself to the unknown and difficult problem of directing the life and military activity of 10,000,000 of men's lives; men whose combined efforts, though extremely various, it was essential to lead with one will, one thought, to the final goal.

CHAPTER XVII

FIRST DAYS AT GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

TOWARDS night, on November 23rd, 1916, I arrived at the station of Mohileff. First of all I went to see General Alexeieff, but, from his wife, who had been called to him on account of his illness, I learnt that he was very weak, and she asked me not to tire him much. My visit did not last more than three minutes.

By telephone from the Governor's house I was later on informed that the Tsar would receive me before dinner. At the stated hour I entered the audience chamber where, already waiting the arrival of the Tsar, were collected about twenty people, among them officers of high rank from foreign missions. But my old acquaintance, the English General, Waters, was not among them; he was replaced by General Sir John Hanbury Williams, with whom I was to have in the future not a few serious conversations.

The first person whose presence astonished me was General Gilinsky, whom I had thought was at the French Headquarters. It was explained that, not long before the illness of General Alexeieff, he was called from France on the plausible pretence of giving a personal report on the work of his mission, but in reality it was in order to replace him. Gilinsky had not yet had an audience with the Tsar. Soon the door from His Majesty's cabinet was opened and I was asked to enter. After the first words of greeting, I considered it my duty to assure the Tsar that my appoint-

ment to the General Headquarters was quite unexpected; that on my future work I would concentrate all my force of mind and will for the best execution of the difficult task confided to me; and I asked him to believe that always, and in all cases, I would be guided by one motive — to achieve the greatest advantage for my Tsar and country. I further told the Tsar that I was not an ambitious man; that all my life I had guided myself on definite principles from which I never deviated, and would never deviate; and that the first of these was truthfulness and sincerity in all my aims and actions.

I pointed out the difficulties of a temporary occupation of such a responsible position, but the rule I would lay down would be that I would carry out my duties as though they were confided to me permanently, not binding myself implicitly to the plans of my predecessor, though knowing General Alexeieff I thought that we should not clash in serious things. In conclusion I told the Tsar that I would always be frank with him; and would only tell the truth, and the whole truth.

His Majesty's answer proved to me that he fully appreciated all that I said. He was not only convinced, but desired me to follow out the principles which I had laid down. After a short talk we went together to the dinner table. At the Tsar's table the conversation in which the representatives of the foreign missions, sitting opposite the Tsar, took part, was general; the talk was generally in French, and His Majesty joined with great animation. Sitting at his left hand, in the usual place of the Tsarevitch, was the oldest of the foreign representatives, the Belgian General, Count Rikkel. The Minister of the Court, Count Frederiks, was not in Mohileff at the moment, and his place was taken by the General Aide-de-Camp,

Maximovitch, who was the Governor-General of Warsaw during the Revolution of 1905. The other persons of the Tsar's suite were those whom I have described in a previous chapter.

After dinner I returned to the quarters of the Staff. Awaiting the departure of General Alexeieff to the south, I temporarily chose a small room as my private office, in which, in the morning, His Majesty received the reports of the Chief of the Staff and which, except at these hours, was usually free. From this moment there moved before me a kaleidoscope of people not known to me; some came with reports, and some only came into contact with me in a general way. In these days I appreciated what invaluable service my two weeks' visit to Pskoff for the temporary taking of the position of Commander-in-Chief of the northern front had rendered me. This two weeks' work gave me a greater insight into the duties of the highest staffs, the General Staff in Petrograd, and also into the business of the Central Governments of the capital, as it is with these the Commanders-in-Chief have often to deal. Naturally, every new-comer had not only to report to me his present duties, but also to make me acquainted with the general sphere of the work confided to him.

The chief assistant of General Alexeieff with regard to strategic operations was the Quartermaster-General Poustovoitenko, with whom General Alexeieff had served from the very beginning of the war. But at our first meeting General Alexeieff had told me that in case I wished to choose another assistant he had already asked His Majesty's approval for General Poustovoitenko to be appointed Chief of a division. General Alexeieff further remarked that I should probably wish to have, in the capacity of my first assistant, my former Chief of Staff of

the 6th Corps, and at present Chief of the Staff of the Special Army, Major-General Alexeieff. I did not oppose my predecessor, but all the same this was not my intention. The simultaneous departure of Major-General Alexeieff and myself from the Special Army, for whose deeds I was always responsible, would have upset too much the normal course of the work of the Staff and the life of the Army. Besides, I intended to choose for the post of the Quartermaster-General of the General Staff a person who, after my departure, could continue to work with General Alexeieff. I could not answer for this, so far as my Chief of Staff, Major-General Alexeieff, was concerned, for General Alexeieff did not know him at all.

On this and on succeeding days I began to become acquainted with all branches of work of the General Headquarters which required the direction, instructions, and arrangement of the Chief of the Staff. A mere list of the heads of this work would fill whole pages, as the Chief of the Staff had to direct not only the strategic work of the Army, but had to introduce reforms and the inevitable reorganisation of the Army. And further, to his duties belonged the direction of the railways in the region occupied by the Army and its base. By this network of railways, military transport was exclusively accomplished when the troops were transferred from one army to another. The Chief of the Staff had to direct the work of the supply branches as much as it concerned the distribution of supplies on the different fronts. He had also to busy himself in deciding in principle the distribution of artillery supplies and periods of new formations of the artillery, and for that he had to deal with the Inspector of the Artillery, the Grand Duke Serge Michailovitch, though the latter, while subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief ac-

cording to the law, in regard to his work very rarely required to consult His Majesty. Under these conditions the Chief of the Staff had to direct the activity of the "Field Ataman" of all the Cossack troops, who was the Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovitch; to direct the rear administrative work of aviation, and the supplying of materials, which depended upon the Grand Duke Alexander Michailovitch. Not less important were the engineering and medical departments, and finally all the affairs passing through the Civil Chancery, and the Chancery for Foreign Affairs. Through these departments passed the affairs and relations with all Ministers, especially with the Ministers of the Interior and Foreign Affairs as well as, in some exceptional cases, the immediate relations with foreign Governments.

I shall not enumerate the other persons and institutions with whom the Chief of the Staff had to deal, in which number were included the immediate relations with the heads of foreign missions. In order to obtain a comprehensive idea of his duties one must add to all this the number of people visiting the Chief of the Staff every day, and those who came to the General Headquarters on duty or for their semi-private matters. Among these, naturally, the most important and most lengthy conversations were with Ministers who brought reports to the Tsar. As I became acquainted with the people and the work, knowing the character of General Alexeieff, who himself attended to work which could have been done successfully by his assistants, I understood why the gradual and imperceptible illness finally broke down his health.

There were many affairs which could easily have been handed over to another person, for instance to a Sub-Chief of the Staff, who would receive general instructions, but as

no such post existed, I determined to establish it. If General Alexeieff had not come to this decision himself, it was not because he wanted to keep all matters, even those of smaller importance, exclusively in his hands, but it was owing to his extraordinary natural delicacy. Understanding that for such a post it was necessary to choose a man with great qualities, he did not want to deprive the Army of him, knowing as he did the difficulty of replacing him. But the most important reason which influenced me was the thought that what had happened to General Alexeieff might happen to anyone — unexpected illness, depriving him of the possibility of continuing his responsible work. From such a contingency I was not free, nor, in particular, was General Alexeieff, in the case of his return to his post, as probably his strength would not be fully recovered. It was indispensable that near the Chief of Staff should be a person fully able, if only temporarily, to replace him without any detriment to the work.

Next morning the ordinary routine work began. At first I found it very tiring, physically, as there were not enough hours in a day for its accomplishment, and mentally, because there was so much new information which had to be assimilated, and so many questions to be decided. Naturally with every day the work became easier. On the next day, at ten o'clock in the morning, I commenced the usual reports to the Tsar. This day they were a little longer, as besides the ordinary reading, in the original, of military reports which came from all the armies and headquarters, from the staffs of the fronts and the Caucasian Army, some reports had to be made for personal report to the Tsar as to what had happened during the illness of Alexeieff and until my arrival. For almost a week General Alexeieff had not made any report to the

Emperor. This fact was explained by the necessity of allowing four days for my journey, and by the circumstance that it was not at once decided who would be chosen as temporary successor of General Alexeieff. My appointment to the General Headquarters, as far as I know, was the wish of General Alexeieff.

When my reports were finished, the Emperor went to the sick general as he had done from the time when Alexeieff did not rise from his bed. Before he went to the sick man the Emperor asked his wife about the course of the illness. Towards the end of the reports the Tsarevitch came with the aide-de-camp on duty, and waited for his father on the landing-place, as there was no other room.

On the next day at midday, in the large hall of the local district Law Courts, which had been taken over by the different departments of the General Headquarters, I gave an audience to all, without any exception, who served in the different offices that were dependent on the Chief of the General Staff.

It was necessary to divide this audience into two parts, and even then each of these comprised about 500 people; this number will not surprise those who are acquainted with the number of persons serving in the Headquarters of our Allies. I intended to gather all my co-workers and subordinates, snatching them for a time from their work, instead of making a round of their posts, as only in this way could I explain to them in a few words how I interpreted the work of the Staff, especially under war conditions. I asked them above all to be directed by the knowledge that the Staffs exist for the troops, and not the troops for the Staffs; in this was the only justification for their existence and for the comparatively large number of those called to this work.

I also asked everyone to remember always that, although they have to deal with dead paper, yet behind that dead paper always stood living deeds, living people, whose lives and activity entirely depended upon the degree of conscientiousness which good workers put into every task confided to them. In addition I reminded them that accidental mistakes in war time are very often paid for with the price of men's blood, and that however small and insignificant might be the work confided to the willing, modest worker, its result might at the last have a great influence on the general work of the Army. Almost the same thing, though probably in other words, I repeated to the assembled officials of the Administration of Military Communication, only adding that their work was more complicated in that, hand in hand, they had to work on two different Administrations — the Administration of Military Communications and the Ministry of Ways and Communication; that if during the time of peace, so-called *rivalité de métier* — rivalry of profession — and friction among different administrations give sad results, any such manifestation in time of war would be simply a crime, bearing a heavy punishment in the moral code.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN 1916

GENERAL ALEXEIEFF recovered his strength a little, and I had the opportunity of having with him almost every day, longer and longer conversations, as I wanted to fix with him the general view with regard to some military and political questions, which would not bear delay.

During these conversations I learnt from him that he had succeeded in persuading the Tsar of the desirability of replacing the President of the Council of Ministers, Stuermer, by another person. The Emperor had been convinced by his arguments, and his choice fell on the Minister of Ways and Communications, Alexander Trepoff, who in taking up the post of President of the Council of Ministers did not leave the post of Minister of Ways and Communications, a post that he had occupied since the spring of 1915. The Empress Alexandra now arrived, and General Alexeieff explained that, having lost, in the person of Stuermer, her protégé, the Empress probably wanted to influence the Tsar to keep in office as Minister of the Interior Protopopoff, who, it was generally thought, had been appointed at her wish.

The approaching arrival of Alexander Trepoff and the events which preceded it confirmed this opinion, as it occurred at the same time as the visit to Mohileff of the Empress. During his audience with the Tsar, Trepoff presented to him, for the signature of the Senate, the decree already prepared for the dismissal from his post of the

Minister Protopopoff, but the Tsar left it with him, promising Trepoff before his departure from Mohileff to Petrograd on the same evening to give a final decision. This happened on the next day after the departure of Alexeieff from Mohileff, about December 4th, 1916.

Directly after his audience, Trepoff, whom I had known before these days, came to me and expressed his fear that the dismissal of Protopopoff would not take place. Meanwhile the opening of the new Session of the Imperial Duma, in which he held the prominent position of Minister and President, was approaching. His address should have been based principally upon the possibility of the harmonious and consistent work of the Duma, after the replacement of those persons with whom it was felt they could not get on. Trepoff frankly asked me, did I also intend to examine the affairs of internal politics or busy myself exclusively with the immediate direction of military operations? He appealed to my patriotic feelings, asking me if it were possible for me to help him, and before it was too late to talk the situation over with the Tsar and to try to convince him that Trepoff's request for Protopopoff's resignation was imperative. On the spot I asked by telephone the aide-de-camp on duty when I could see the Emperor, and received the answer that the Tsar in about an hour would be leaving as usual, to dine with his family in the Imperial train, in which the Empress with her daughters lived, and for this reason the Emperor asked me to come if possible immediately.

Having first discussed another affair connected with the course of military events, I asked the permission of the Emperor to touch upon a question which did not immediately pertain to my office. I said that I considered that I had the right to do this, for, as I reminded him, no

longer ago than the same day at lunch, when the Emperor saw Trepoff and myself engaged in animated conversation he had turned to us with words in which he expressed the hope that we should both work amicably for the general cause, and also be entirely frank with each other. To this, half jokingly, I had answered the Tsar that the future would show, but that there certainly would be no lack of frankness on my side. Trepoff was, as a matter of fact, frank with me, and told me the subject of his visit to the Tsar, especially concerning the expected removal of Protopopoff. Having received the permission of the Tsar, in a long conversation, I endeavoured to convince His Majesty that even if Protopopoff could be considered efficient for the post he occupied, about which I had some doubt, I thought that under the present conditions it was of paramount importance that there should be perfect harmony between the Ministers he chose and the Imperial Duma. This harmony I told him was jeopardised by the presence in the Council of Ministers of Protopopoff; that to close the Duma now would be rather dangerous, as advantage could be taken of it by those elements hostile to the present State organisation; that it was necessary to dismiss Protopopoff, even if it had to be done reluctantly and considered as a sacrifice or concession to the public opinion. The Emperor listened attentively to the end, but he did not give me a direct answer, and, on leaving, I had not gathered the impression that he was willing to accede to the wish of Trepoff. In the hall outside I met the Minister of Justice, Makaroff, who was awaiting an audience. I told Makaroff in a few words the subject of my conversation with the Emperor, asking him to try to influence him in the same direction. Returning home I informed Trepoff, who waited for me in my cabinet, of the

GENERAL GOURKO AS CHIEF OF THE STAFF, 1916–17

subject of my conversation and the request I had made to Makaroff.

Without losing hope that the Tsar would consent to the dismissal of Protopopoff, Trepoff invited me to name a person who would be able, during the time of war, to perform the duties of Minister of the Interior, and then he considered the possibility of appointing a military man to this post. When we took leave of each other, he agreed that he would let me know if he received the decree signed by the Tsar for the dismissal of Protopopoff before he left. I did not receive the promised information, and I understood that Trepoff's request was not granted by the Tsar.

On the succeeding days, the Ministers one after another came to Mohileff, and almost all, after making their reports to the Tsar, found an opportunity before their departure of remaining with me for some time, in order to discuss personally the general position of things. On the second day after my conversation with the Tsar, entering before lunch the Audience Chamber, I met among the waiting visitors the Minister of Interior, Protopopoff, who had arrived with General Kourloff, who was doing the duty of Assistant Minister in the Police Department. Both of these persons were so hostile to me that, passing them, to take the usual place of the Chief-of-Staff on the right flank of those awaiting the appearance of the Tsar near the door of his cabinet, I greeted them silently, confining myself to a cold handshake.

As I have already said, the Ministers who came to the General Headquarters, especially on their first arrival, considered it their duty to see and to converse with the Chief of the General Staff. To find the Chief of Staff at home was not difficult, as I left my cabinet only during the hours

of my meals, and I had in these early days, owing to the quantity of work, time neither to pay official visits nor even to indulge in a walk. I had to confine myself to the stroll to the Staff mess, which was about ten minutes from the building in which I worked. In spite of this, Protopopoff found an opportunity of visiting me at a time when I was not at home. It is probably of a certain interest, though, on general lines to show what Protopopoff was, as he played such an important rôle in the approaching Russian Revolution.

Protopopoff received his military education at a school for junior officers, and not at the Military Academy. His first years of service as an officer he passed in the ranks of a mounted Grenadier regiment. At that time we each had the rank of cornets ("sous-lieutenant" in the cavalry), and were nearly of the same year, so that I had sometimes happened to meet him, but our paths had diverged, and I had soon lost sight of him.

Not long afterwards he received a large fortune from the Russian General Seliverstoff, well known in Paris between 1880–1890, who, as his office was a sinecure, took the opportunity of spending the whole of his time abroad. After receiving this fortune Protopopoff left the Army, occupied himself in business affairs and began to serve in the position of a provincial delegate of the Zemstvo. He was then elected to the post of a marshal of nobility of one of the Volga provinces. It was said that during the year before the war, in consequence of his unsuccessful financial speculations, his circumstances had become straitened, but with the beginning of the conflict they improved. As a result of his election to the Zemstvo he had an opportunity to be elected a member of the Imperial Duma from a party of the "Octobrists." One of the peculiarities of his

character was a talent for adapting himself to people who were of different political views. Such a phenomenon may not be uncommon in countries where political and constitutional life has been long established; it is not usual in States which are, politically, young — where for the most part the differences of political views tend to preclude friendly discussions, especially among those who give themselves up entirely to political work. Naturally this phenomenon in fairly definite form still exists in Russia. There is no conviction in political parties that only at the price of mutual concession can the normal life of the country be attained.

In the Fourth Duma, Protopopoff was elected to the post of Vice-President of the Imperial Duma, thanks to the influential party of "Octobrists," otherwise known as the Centre. The occupation of this post enabled him to be included among the members of the Duma elected by the latter to the Staff of Delegates who in the spring of 1915 went to the Allied countries. The object of the delegates was to enter into immediate relations with the Legislate Assemblies of our western Allies. In this way Protopopoff became head of the group of the members of the Imperial Duma who went abroad, while at the head of the members of the Imperial Council was elected my brother, a member of the Imperial Council from the Zemstvo. As the senior representative of the Imperial Duma, Protopopoff visited all the capitals of our Allies; he was welcomed by all the legislations, and to such greetings he had, in turn with my brother, to answer. In this way, of course, he became known to Western Europe. He showed himself to those with whom he had to deal in Western Europe in quite a different rôle from that which he soon began to play on his return to Russia, especially when he was appointed

Minister of the Interior, and his actions then were not quite comprehended.

Protopopoff did not return to Russia with the other delegates of the Russian Legislature, but remained in London. About his activity and relations there much gossip was afterwards circulated. I will not repeat it, as it may be of doubtful value. His stay in one of the capitals of the Scandinavian Kingdom, after his return from abroad, greatly influenced his future fate. Here he stayed with one of the delegates of the Imperial Council, P. A. Olsoufieff, who had remained there for his own affairs. Protopopoff, on neutral territory, had to meet in the neutral diplomatic circles with one whom afterwards he alleged to be a German diplomat, but who in reality did not occupy any diplomatic post, though he undoubtedly was an agent of the German Ministry of the Exterior. In this meeting Protopopoff asked Olsoufieff to take part, and he accepted. In the course of time in the Russian Press a polemic opened between Protopopoff and Olsoufieff, as both explained differently the circumstances concerning this meeting. But this polemic began much later, when Protopopoff, then occupying the post of Minister of the Interior, definitely broke with the Legislature and with his party. Protopopoff after his return to Petrograd affirmed that, during this meeting, he was only a listener, but what he heard from the German diplomat he said was so interesting that informing the President of the Duma, M. V. Rodzianko, of it, he asked him to procure him an audience with the Emperor in order to inform the Tsar what he had heard in Stockholm about the person mentioned. Afterwards it was asserted that his story of what he had heard from the German quasi-diplomat was concocted by him only for the purpose of having sufficient cause for asking an audience of the

Emperor, and also to be introduced to the Empress. The real purpose is difficult to explain, but undoubtedly his first audience with the Tsar was not the last.

Here we must bear in mind that Protopopoff took advantage of his natural ability of entering into the soul of a man by his pleasing and affable manner. Probably he fully succeeded, as in a comparatively short time Russian social opinion was astonished by the appointment of Protopopoff as Minister of the Interior. But it was not the first time that a Minister had been chosen from the Imperial Duma. Protopopoff, in this post, replaced the Minister Hvostoff, who was also a member of the Imperial Duma. The Minister of Agriculture, formerly a member of the Imperial Duma, and later a member of the Imperial Council, was Count Bobrinsky. But if such appointments were looked upon sympathetically, that cannot be said about the appointment of Protopopoff. The discord between Protopopoff and the greater part of the Imperial Duma was already known, and for that reason his appointment could not facilitate but rather make more difficult the co-operation between the Government and the Imperial Duma.

During the early days of my stay in the General Headquarters, the President of the Imperial Duma, Rodzianko, arrived with a report for the Tsar, as the reopening of the Duma was shortly expected. The members of the Duma were agitated on account of the rumour that the Minister of the Interior, Protopopoff, was leading events so as to close the Duma, and naturally they feared such a measure the result of which it was impossible to forecast. The well-intentioned people of the whole of educated Russia could not have two opinions about the results of such a decisive political stroke. The meeting of Rodzianko with the Emperor did not in any way confirm the reality of such

fears. But having been invited to His Majesty's luncheon, Rodzianko was not asked to dinner, though his train did not leave until rather late at night. As this did not coincide with what had happened during his previous visits, he saw in it some allusion to the sense of the dissatisfaction of the Tsar with the work of the Duma in general or with Rodzianko's own report in particular.

The conspicuous part which the personality of M. V. Rodzianko played in the first days of the *coup d'état* deserves a more detailed mention of him. Belonging himself to a good old family from one of the "Little Russian" (Ukraina) Provinces, he, while still a young officer in the Guards, by his marriage with Princess Golitzin became related to the whole Russian aristocracy. However, not satisfied with the prospects of a military career, he soon retired and began to serve as a delegate of the Zemstvo (Country Council). In his day, as the President of the country Government of a province he excited great newspaper polemics, which made his name known to all intellectual Russia. With the entrance of Russia into political life after the first Revolution in 1905, he, having first become a member of the most numerous and influential political party of the "Octobrists," entered the Imperial Duma, and the Duma at the third and fourth sitting chose him as their President. In this capacity he undoubtedly attained great popularity, but it cannot be said that his influence on the course of work in the Imperial Duma showed itself very definitely. His activity as President undoubtedly pleased the greater part, not only of the Centre, but the members of both extreme wings of the Duma. Possessing oratorial talent, and what in French is called *un esprit d'apropos* (presence of mind), he in all cases knew how to represent in a worthy way this great institu-

tion of which he was President. He understood that his duty lay in the preservation of the value and prestige of this young institution, in which in certain cases the extreme Left and extreme Right parties were opposed to each other, and which the higher institutions of the Government did not always want to take into consideration. The owner of considerable wealth, he, in all the events of his life, showed a complete independence which in its time had raised his prestige in social circles. My old acquaintance with him made our relations and conversations easier; for the rest this was not a time to avoid entire frankness in judgments and views.

In his turn, the Minister of Public Education, Count Ignatieff, cousin of our Military Attaché in Paris, visited me. Being in his ideas definitely monarchical, he nevertheless showed great liberality in his views and in his actions, understanding the meaning of the word in its best sense. Notwithstanding the exceptional conditions of the country during the three years of war, he always found it possible to develop and continue the work of reforming the Russian high and middle schools (Universities and Colleges), and to help all provincial Russia to bring to life general elementary education, a reform needing above all the realisation of the programme for building and opening schools in all the large territories of rural Russia. Only people acquainted with the peculiarity of Russian provincial life can understand the difficulties which faced the realisation of this programme, especially in the short time allotted for its accomplishment. As he did not agree on vital points with the action of Protopopoff, Ignatieff more than once asked the Tsar to be allowed to retire from ministerial duties, but every time was obliged to accede to the insistent desire of the Emperor that he should keep his post. The

man who came most often to the General Headquarters was the Minister of War, General Shouvaeff, who in 1916 took the place of General Soukhomlinoff's successor, General Polivanoff. His appointment to such a responsible position was in its time criticised on every side, as the people who knew him intimately did not consider him sufficiently experienced. The best justification for such an appointment was that the most important work of the Ministry of War was centred in supplying the Army with all the necessities for conducting operations. In this work General Shouvaeff was a pastmaster, as for four years he had been the Chief of the Army Commissariat. But on the other hand, this led to his giving his attention exclusively to the equipment of the Army. They said about him that in every question which he discussed he invariably turned to that of boots. And, really, the business of supplying and manufacturing the Army foot-gear he learnt to perfection. I heard from him himself that he gave an entire lecture to the assembly of Ministers about the manufacturing of boots, explaining that to equip the Russian Army with tens of millions of pairs of boots on the method adopted of making them from one single piece of leather, there was not a sufficient number of horned cattle grazing on the whole vast fields of Russia and Siberia.

I must say about General Shouvaeff that he was of a perfectly honest and straightforward nature; perhaps he had a habit of saying about himself a little too often that he was an " old soldier "— and by this, in Russia, is understood a man straightforward and disinterested, devoted to his Tsar and to his country, albeit devoted to his work, and not to personalities, as General Shouvaeff in reality was.

But the Minister with whom I was the most thrown into

contact was the Minister of Agriculture. He had only recently entered into the work of this complicated and responsible office, and was so overwhelmed with his duties that it was difficult for him to spare the time to go to Mohileff. In November and December he was obliged to undertake an extended tour through the whole of Russia in order to arrange in the most important centres of the corn trade, with the public establishments, and especially with the Zemstvos, for the supply of provisions required for the military commissariat. During this tour he intended to go to the General Headquarters. However, this plan was altered by His Majesty's arrival at the Capital in the beginning of December. I had temporarily to consult with his assistants who had come to the General Headquarters, and at last I was obliged to go to the Capital myself, owing to the necessity of preparing the ground for the coming International Conferences in December or January.

To make it clear how extensive was the work of the Ministry of Agriculture, it is sufficient to say that this Ministry had from the beginning of the war to think about all the necessities of military intendancy, *i.e.* the supply of the Army, with most of the food products needed. It is necessary to add that in the first years of war, when at the head of this work stood such an active and energetic man as A. W. Krivoshèyn, the Ministry of Agriculture was more than successful. All military exigencies, in spite of the partly insufficient productiveness of the country and the possible duration of the war, were always fully satisfied. But while Count Bobrinsky was Minister of Agriculture, in accordance with the demands of the social leaders who were protecting exclusively the interests of the town and working population, fixed prices were established for the products of the country, without at the same time such

prices being fixed for the products of the greatest necessities for the use of the country people. This was violation of the fundamental economical principle of supply and demand. Unnoticed, but unavoidably, the number of those who dealt in the market for the rural products, began to diminish, consequently, also unavoidably, but for the Army very noticeably, the provisions of the warehouses began to diminish. There was a time when in regard to some products warehouses were filled with half a year's supply of provisions for the requirements of the whole army. But after the number of soldiers was increasing, and the provisions were diminishing, food supplies began to melt away. Besides, it was necessary to provide for the approach of the spring-time, the time of impassable ways and bad roads, the period of the beginning of work in the fields, when, even in time of peace, the supply, in the hands of the middleman between the producer and consumer, almost stops. At this time they could take the provisions from the warehouses, established in the winter-time in the docks of our powerful rivers. With the opening of navigation these provisions, amounting to millions of tons, were sent by water to the centres of need, or to the important railway junctions. The Minister of Agriculture had to consider the supplying of these warehouses.

Let me say for the honour of the Russian peasants and landlords that they never refused to supply for the market the country products, when they were sure that these products were destined for the needs of the Army. And many were the cases in which the peasants willingly collected different things of military necessity and by chosen men sent them directly in waggon loads to the Army. While I still commanded my corps, unknown people came to me from the centre of Russia and far Siberia bringing with

them the offerings of their fellow villagers. This happened for the greater part before Christmas and Easter during the time of calm in the Army. Towards summer these generally were stopped, because the winter frosts alone made it possible to bring to the Front the majority of those products unspoilt.

Of no small interest for me was the visit to the General Headquarters of the Minister of the Board of Trade, Prince Shahovskoy, who had the general direction of the disposition of the mineral fuel excavated in Russia. The question of mineral fuel was for us of the greatest importance, and its successful or unsuccessful decision almost mechanically influenced the other branches of the commercial life of the country. But these were all questions of the internal life or interior politics, and notwithstanding the general military calm on all our fronts, as well as on that of our Allies, the most important question for the Chief of the General Staff was undoubtedly the leading of the military operations.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FIGHTING IN ROUMANIA

THE winter of 1916–17 did not bring any calm to the Russian High Command. The cause lay in the manner in which the military events developed along the Roumano-Austrian and Roumano-Bulgarian frontiers.

The successful, not to say victorious, advance of the Roumanian troops into the boundaries of Transylvania at the end of August and in the beginning of September 1916 was not long continued. The gradual calm in the autumn of 1916 on all important fronts gave an easy opportunity to the Austro-Germans, and enabled them by transferring the troops, first, to stop the further moving of Roumanian troops, and then to begin the advance. The Roumanian troops, being scattered over almost the whole length of their frontier, really could not show serious resistance to the Austro-Germans, the more so because the reserves which they had at the beginning were quickly sent to the fighting lines. The first aid which we gave to Roumania — the aid which she refused before the military action — consisted in the gradual lengthening of our left flank along the Roumanian-Transylvanian frontier. Naturally such a replacing of Roumanian troops by the Russians gave to the Roumanian command fresh reserves; unfortunately, owing to the natural conditions, these reserves could only be sent in comparatively small quantities. Another help given by Russia to Roumania, soon after she took the field, consisted in sending a special corps composed of Russian and

Serbian divisions on the left side of the Danube to Dobroudja.

When these troops were sent, people in Russia were holding the delusive hope that the Bulgarians would not decide to unsheathe the sword and to shed the blood of brothers and the descendants of those soldiers who, less than forty years ago, drenched Bulgarian earth with their blood and with the price of it created Bulgarian independence. However, these illusions soon faded, and finally died away as this Russo-Serbian corps, having met with the larger Bulgarian forces in a very bloody fight, suffered a serious defeat and gradually fell back to the railway line of Tchernavody–Konstantza in order to shorten the front defence. This sector began to acquire greater and greater importance, so that, in the middle of November, the separate corps was increased until it became the Separate Danube Army, and was directly dependent upon the General Headquarters. This army was entrusted to General Saharoff. His Chief of Staff was General Shishkievitch. In course of time these persons and the Staff of the Danube Army formed the nucleus of the Command and of the Staff of the Roumanian front, but this happened only at the end of the month of December.

The heaviest time for the Roumanian Army was undoubtedly November — December. Defending its frontier from the projecting corner of Transylvania to Orsovy — and, further, watching the whole length of the Danube — the Roumanian Army had to fight, with comparatively weak forces, against an adversary larger in numbers. But the great advantage of the Germans lay in another direction. On their side were troops and Chiefs, both juniors and seniors, who were experienced in warfare. The troops were well taught and fully equipped. On the con-

trary, in the hands of the Roumanian Command was only raw material. As to the capacity of this material, with regard to the soldiers, the general answers to the call were good, but it was quite different in the case of the Staffs and Officers, which were not technically at the required height and were not possessed of sufficient theoretic military knowledge. The best weapon was acknowledged to be the artillery, but even in this they did not know at all how to adopt the new methods which had been used during the present war. So the Allies went to the help of the Roumanian Army by sending instructors from the French Army and special artillery instructors from the Russian.

At the head of the French instructors was appointed General Berthelot, and he also was the closest adviser of the Roumanian King, Ferdinand, in regard to military operations. Evidently it was not easy to direct the operations of troops whose merits and inadequacies were not sufficiently known to the leaders. Only by this can I explain that all operations undertaken for meeting the German attack — these undoubtedly possessing the quality of initiative and of mobility of troops — were calculated as though the troops were just as able to lead the war in trenches or to manœuvre in the field. This was especially shown when, in the end of November, the Germans in several directions crossed the frontier and invaded Roumania. The desire of arresting this invasion by flank movements and rear attacks on the German columns invariably resulted in the defeat of the Roumanian troops, and not seldom in their capture. With every day the number of the more efficient Roumanian divisions became smaller, and the danger of invasion by the German troops increased. It was easy to foresee the possibility of the

arrival of the Austro-Germans in the Roumanian capital.

Then it was that the Roumanian High Command and the Roumanian Government, through their military representative at the "Stafka," General Koanda, turned to His Majesty asking him to give a still more real help to Roumania, not only by replacing her army by ours on our left flank, but by sending some corps for the direct defence of Bukarest. On the next morning the Tsar told me of the conversations with General Koanda. Thanks to this I learnt by chance that in the "Stafka" an order had been adapted according to which the oldest representatives of foreign military missions asked audience of His Majesty without informing the Chief of Staff. Such an order, of course, could not be considered normal, for this reason. Having a direct conversation with the Tsar, they could easily put him in an awkward position for an immediate and correct answer, for it could not be expected that the Commander-in-Chief would always sufficiently know the true facts with regard to such questions as might thus be raised by the foreign representatives. Such a simple method is never observed in any country as between the head of the State even for foreign ambassadors; the latter always seek an audience through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This incident gave me the opportunity of informing the heads of the foreign missions, through their senior member, that they should warn me when they wished to have a conversation concerning affairs with His Majesty, and tell me more or less about its subject.

To comply with the demand of the Roumanian Command was not an easy one, for it was necessary to transport the reserves by our railways and those of Roumania. It would have been necessary for these reserves to be so big

that we could only rely upon them for the succcss of our side; or that in an extremity they would form, independently, the new centre of resistance. It was indispensable at the same time to explain the mutual agreements between the Chiefs of the Russian and Roumanian command. The bringing in of small Russian units into the composition of Roumanian troops would only cause them to be broken up in parts, and consequently increase the number of the troops retreating. For this reason the immediate fulfilment of the Roumanians' request could not be even entertained, but preparative measures were undertaken at once. As for the rest, it was only the confirmation of the measures taken before, which on general lines led to the gradual drawing together of whole armies for future filling of a large break between our left flank army, under General Lechitzky, on the frontier of Transylvania, and the right flank of the Danube Army, at this time active in Dobroudja. But the realisation of these plans could only be tardy, and could not provide help in time to keep Bukarest in our hands; and that is why at the price of weakening the defence of the Dobroudja, General Saharoff received orders to gradually lengthen the lines of his defence along the Danube with the aim to include finally in them the protection of the Roumanian capital.

While these instructions were being carried out, to the left flank of the Army of Lechitzky came a disengaged reserve corps under the command of General Denikin, the same General who, during the time of the Provisional Government, successfully occupied these posts: Chief of the General Staff with Alexeieff and Brussiloff, Commander-in-Chief of the western front, where he replaced me, and Commander-in-Chief of the south-western front at the time of Korniloff's advance against Kerensky. At this

BEDROOM OF HIS MAJESTY AND THE TSAREVITCH AT THE HEADQUARTERS IN MOHILEFF

time he was arrested by the "Soviet" Council of Soldiers as a Commander-in-Chief who openly proclaimed his loyalty to the Commander-in-Chief of all the Armies, General Korniloff.

The existence of this corps gave me the opportunity of proposing to General Koanda to ask the Roumanian Command in what manner and where they could send this corps with the object of directly protecting Bukarest. Rather late at night in the cabinet and in the presence of the Tsar there was a conference in which General Koanda informed me that the Roumanian Government needed reinforcements, and, thanks to the improved working of her railways, such a help would be opportune and real. It is necessary to note that already at that time the working of the Roumanian railways caused complaints from all the Russian military chiefs. This work was so unsatisfactory that officers coming from Roumania affirmed that the cause was not only ignorance in the execution of this complicated task, but was a real manifestation of ill-will by the railway men, who exhibited an actual pro-German tendency. I will not attempt to judge of this. It ought not to be forgotten that in all these times, and in all countries during military unsuccessfulness, suspicions arise of treachery. And as the presence of pro-German circles in Roumania was accepted as an undoubted fact, this circumstance gave still more food for talk and suspicion of treachery in the country.

Having discussed this directly with the Roumanian General Staff, General Koanda, quite distressed, informed me next day that Roumania unfortunately had to refuse the offered help. He explained that the transfer to Bukarest of the whole corps could be only done by railway, and the railway line, which could be taken advantage of, was even unable to bring to Bukarest the Roumanian divi-

sion which was replaced, on the right Roumanian flank, by the troops of Lechitzky. This may be explained in a great measure by the fact that this railway was at that time occupied with the evacuation of Bukarest, and thanks to this was blocked by the superfluous rolling stock. In the course of time the evacuation of the rolling stock of Western Roumanian network caused the Roumanian authorities many troubles and difficulties. The answer of General Koanda made me understand that, for the strategic development of the above-mentioned Russian corps to fill the break between Lechitzky and Saharoff, no reliance could be placed on the help of the Roumanian railways. To save time and for the possible stopping of the German advance it was necessary to take advantage of the numerous Russian cavalry. Already division after division had marched down to the back of the south-western front, and was gradually directed to the centre of Roumania, leaving behind our infantry corps.

One ought not to forget that it was autumn; highways are almost unknown in Roumania; the roads on the soft earth do not allow a big movement without becoming an impassable marsh. Our cavalry in the trenches could not keep the horses useful for making long journeys; during the march through Roumania they had to feed their horses more with Indian corn than with oats. All this could not but retard the movements of the cavalry, and impair its efficiency in the field campaign, for which in a great measure military activity would be necessary in Wallachia.

The time necessary for the achievement of all these measures did not give us any right to hope that we could keep Bukarest in our hands. But sooner or later the joining together of Brussiloff's front and the Danube Army was to be brought about. On account of this the question arose as to how the High Command on this front was to be con-

stituted. It had to be taken into consideration that on this front would occur the mixing up of Russian and Roumanian troops. On the other hand there could not be a divided command, nor the establishing of a front, defending the access to the South Russian fertile provinces, which would not be submissive to the Russian High Command. It had to be decided by whom would be accomplished the subordination of the Roumanian troops to the Russian Generalissimo. On the one hand this question was easy, as the latter was the Tsar, but on the other hand it was difficult, as at the head of the Roumanian troops was the Roumanian King, Ferdinand.

It was true that forty years ago the Roumanian King Charles, at that time Grand Duke, submitted to the Grand Duke Nicolai, brother of the reigning Emperor, Alexander II. An exchange of telegrams commenced, but did not lead to a simple decision, so as to organise the Roumanian front on the same basis and under the same control as the rest of the Russian fronts. It was necessary to evolve a more complicated system which would lead to the following situation: King Ferdinand was regarded by us as the Commander-in-Chief of the Roumanian front, which had to be composed of the Roumanian and Russian troops; but no word was said as to whether he was or was not under the control of the Russian High Command. By him was appointed — as the assistant of the Commander-in-Chief, responsible for the military events to the Russian generalissimo — General Saharoff, who, as regards the Russian troops, possessed the right of Commander-in-Chief. With him was established a Russian Staff, at the head of which stood General Shishkievitch, and also a Roumanian Staff for relations with the Roumanian troops, at the head of which was appointed General Presano. The result

showed that such an arrangement did not cause any unusual friction. The relations of General Saharoff with the Roumanian King were normal. Finally the combined military activity of the Russian and Roumanian troops was normal, because of the freely-shown mutual help.

The withdrawal of the Russian troops from the right to the left bank of the Danube, to the number of two corps, was first directed to the attempt to keep Bukarest and then to fill up the left sector of the future Roumanian front, which led to the necessity of Russian troops leaving the line of Tchernavody-Konstantza. First they went back a little in order to shorten their front and to occupy better positions, but they were pushed by the larger numbers of the Bulgar-Turkish forces farther in the direction of the valleys of the lower Danube. In the beginning of 1917, after obstinate fights, the Russian troops had gradually to evacuate the whole of the Dobroudja. Of the two it was the more important to keep ourselves on the right bank of the Seret, than to hold the small space on the right bank of the Danube. It had to be considered that the Danube every year during some weeks, thanks to floating blocks of ice, was quite unnavigable. The Russian troops which remained on the right bank of the Danube could communicate at this time with their base and receive thence everything indispensable by means of the rope ferry near Ismail. This was not sufficient for such a large detachment, and it was quite possible that our troops which remained on the right side of the Danube might have been put into a critical position, having before them an adversary larger in number, and not having behind them a safe line of advance for reinforcements, nor a road for retreat. The concentration of about six divisions of Russian cavalry towards the west from the line of the Seret gave us an opportunity of con-

centrating the Russian corps which for this purpose had to follow ordinary roads. There they could support with combined effort the retreating Roumanian troops and stop the advance of the Germans towards the east. One could count upon the fact that the Russian corps which were brought up would soon be in a position to fill the whole space between the left flank of General Lechitzky's Army and the right flank of the Danube Army under General Saharoff, the latter having gradually retreated from Bukarest in a north-east direction. Then, notwithstanding the continued retreat of the Roumanian troops, after a succession of obstinate battles, the Russian troops succeeded in stopping the further advance of the Austro-Germans on the right bank of the River Seret.

In measure as the Russian troops came in contact with the German troops, the remainder of the Roumanians which had already sufficiently suffered were sent farther back, where they had to be reformed, reinforced, and, it may be said, taught before they could again take part in military action. However, a part of the Roumanian troops which composed the right flank of the whole Roumanian position still kept its military efficiency. Among the number of these troops was specially noted the brigade of eighteen battalions of Kalarash, under General Stroudza. The remaining Roumanian troops which possessed military efficiency were reinforced with some divisions of Russian cavalry, among this number the corps which was under General Mannerheim, the same whose name was known to the whole world in the beginning of the spring of 1918, as he undertook the organisation and command of the White Guards of Finland. Every day the strength of the resistance of the Roumanian troops and the extent of the front confided to her gradually diminished. At the beginning of 1917 to the defence of

the Roumanian troops could be entrusted only a front of thirty kilometres in the Transylvanian Carpathians. Little by little, the arrangements for the direction of the Roumanian front were organised, though there were many difficulties, owing to the indispensability of forming new staffs.

But the greatest difficulties were caused by the regulation and reorganisation of railway affairs. It was necessary to co-ordinate the work of the Russian and Roumanian railways. Neither of them worked normally, but from different causes which still more complicated the position. The Roumanian railways suffered from the blocking of the road and stations by the "rolling-stock" taken from the lines which had already fallen into the adversary's hands. This stock was for the greater part loaded with different commodities from the evacuated capital. The second bad point of the Roumanian railways was the insufficient preparation of the men for the heavy work of the time of war. Our railways at the time, on the contrary, already suffered from the insufficiency of the "rolling-stock," but the personal Staff were already accustomed to their work, and found it possible with insufficient means to obtain the greatest advantage from such means as they did possess. It was still more difficult because the gauge of our tracks did not correspond with that of the Roumanian railways. But every day our position on the new Roumanian front became easier, and the work gradually resumed its normal state. There were other questions giving much trouble to the military authorities of both Allies, and especially to the Roumanian Goverment — the question of the supply of the troops and of the population, especially of that part which had emigrated from Wallachia at the invasion of the Austro-Germans. These things were all intimately connected with the work of the railways. If the Russian troops, which hurried to

the help of the Roumanian troops, had to march hundreds of kilometres in order of campaign, it can well be deduced that the railways did not satisfy the requirements. However, at the price of incredible efforts and of mutual concessions from our side and that of Roumania, neither the troops in the Roumanian frontiers nor the population suffered from severe want of supplies. The greatest failure of the railways was shown in the evacuation of the sick and wounded, but even in this all that was physically possible was done. To arrange this affair in the right way the Commander-in-Chief of the Medical Departments, Prince Alexander Oldenburg, in spite of his age showed untiring energy. Being extremely irascible, he could not endure in other people unconscientious work. Of course all feared his irascibility, but in preparation for his arrival everything was arranged and repaired; all that was lacking was supplied, because it was difficult to hide anything from his observant and experienced eye. In this respect his inspections of all the base sanitary establishments were beneficial.

Thus a complete change of the Roumanian Army was made by the Russians, although on a shortened front. That change could only be effected at the price of the exhaustion of our reserves on the other fronts, and could be only permitted for the period of the winter calm. It was necessary to think of the approaching spring together with the expected advance of all the Allies. The Conference of the representatives of the Allied Armies which took place in the month of November in Paris decided on the necessity of agreeing that the advances of the Allies should take place as far as possible at the same time. It was also decided to commence the first combined advance in the first months of 1917. Such a decision was made on the basis that winter is for the Russian troops the best season for offensive opera-

tions. It must be supposed that in this case they remembered the successful winter campaign of 1812 which led to the complete confusion of the Army of Napoleon. Perhaps this would also refer to the winter campaign of 1914–15, but in both these cases there was no analogy with the approaching campaign of 1917.

The operations in February and March of 1916 afforded a sufficient proof. It was not less necessary to take into consideration the decision of the Allies' military Conference as to the possible preparation for active operations during the month of January or February. As to the spring of 1917 and the summer, it was necessary to be quite ready for the developing of the increasing material means which were received from our own country and coming from our Allies. Busy, too, with the work of preparation was the Staff of the Headquarters, in preparing the material which had to be inspected during the conference of the Commanders-in-Chief of all the fronts. Such conferences under the presidency of the Generalissimo took place a few times a year, but all the Commanders-in-Chief could be called only during the winter period of the campaign. Such a conference was to be called at the end of December 1916 just as it had taken place in December 1915.

CHAPTER XX

FREE POLAND — THE RAILWAY PROBLEM

ALTHOUGH the Roumanian question was not quite decided in the beginning of December, the means by which we were arriving at a possible good solution were noted. St. George's Day on December 9th was approaching, and the personnel of the Tsar's suite turned to me with the question: Did I know where the Tsar intended to pass the day? Would he remain at the General Staff Headquarters or go to one of the fronts to be near his troops, on the fête day; or would he go to Petrograd with the Empress and his daughters, whose early departure from Mohileff had apparently been decided on?

During the first report I touched upon this question and learnt that the Tsar intended not to make it a solemn day this year, but would spend the day on the way between Mohileff and Tsarskoe Selo. The departure of the Tsar from the General Headquarters took place as arranged. Before the departure of the Tsar, I decided in the first audience to touch upon the Polish question, which, in my opinion, had not till now received a sufficiently definite solution. I had the opportunity of giving General Alexeieff my views on it before his departure, and I was quite convinced that we did not really differ in anything essential. I was certain that in the case of his returning to the post of Chief of Staff, my work would be continued in the same spirit.

The first move in the decision of the Polish question was

taken by the Grand Duke Nicolai, who, at the very beginning of the war, turned to the Polish nation with a solemn call, asking them to fight with Russia hand in hand promising them that a victorious war would give to all the Polish nation full autonomy under the sceptre of Russian Tsars. The Grand Duke then acted with the right of a Commander-in-Chief; what kind of instructions he received from the head of the Empire, what rôle in this the Russian Government played — neither the Russian nation nor our Allies, nor the enemies, could know. In order to keep the matter alive during a session of the Imperial Duma, the Prime Minister at the time, J. L. Goremykin, in his speech to the Imperial Duma, declared, for general information, that one of the aims of the war with the Germans was the uniting of the different provinces of the former Polish Kingdom into one, with the idea of giving Poland full autonomy in the Russian Empire. The German Government, seeing with how much interest the Polish nation received this announcement on the part of Russia, and finding that they met with considerable difficulties in administrating the Polish Kingdom, and especially in attempts to form a Polish Army from the Russian Poles, found it necessary at the end of 1916 to declare the foundation of a future independent Polish Kingdom.

This declaration did not at once receive an answer from the Russian Government. But, of course, the future Polish Kingdom, as given by Germany, would only have the semblance of independence. The German Government only spoke about the Russian part of the former Polish Kingdom, leaving quite open the question of the fate of the other two-thirds of Poland, which remained in the possession of Germany and Austria. Intending to touch upon the Polish question in the report to the Tsar, I desired to con-

vince him that it was time for the whole Polish nation to hear directly from him in what manner the head of the Russian Empire considered it necessary to decide the Polish question. On the other side I intended to show the Tsar that the time for half-measures had passed, that the Polish question needed a definite decision; that only such a decision would cut the gordian knot which for more than two centuries had bound the two Slav nations, and better the position of the Polish nation, who were Russian subjects as well as the subjects of our enemies.

In a few words, I desired that in future the Polish question should be decided in this way: that Russia and Poland should only have one thing in common, a common frontier dividing these two independent countries. The other remaining questions which could only concern the Polish nation should be independently decided by the Polish nation itself without any foreign interference. In reality it was the principle that was in time proclaimed by the Russian Revolution, but received quite a wrong realisation — the principle of the free nations.

Such a settlement of the Polish question was in my opinion the best means of satisfying the interests not only of the Polish nation, but also of Russia, especially in the near and even in the far future. Twice during the report to the Tsar I analysed in detail the Polish problem, discussing all the good and bad points of such a radical decision. The enumeration here of all the arguments I used would take too much space. Sufficient to say that my reports to the Tsar each time took more than an hour. Being convinced myself that the Tsar agreed with my arguments, I had to take advantage of the first opportunity in order to enforce this by an act of the supreme will which would be announced for general information.

The speech of the Emperor William, made at the beginning of December 1916, in which he made to the Allies quite clear proposals for peace, gave a good opportunity for it. In one form or another it was necessary to tell our enemies the undoubted truth that if for the declaration of war one nation was sufficient, so for making peace there must be at least two. It is true that in the month of February 1918 Russian Maximalists, according to M. Trotzky, wanted to prove the contrary by declaring to Germany that if she wanted to continue the war with Russia the Bolsheviks, of which he was representative, would not fight Germany any more, and that therefore they considered the war between Germany and Russia at an end.

Many may say that such conduct of the Russian Maximalists violated the truth which had been established long ago, that there is nothing new under the sun. But this is only a long-forgotten way of doing things. It would be different if such a decision had been taken by the people who inhabited Central America when, in the sixteenth century, as it seemed to them, an uncivilised conqueror had come in the person of Ferdinand Cortez, with some thousands of followers. Of the "Aztecs" and "Incas" most of us have only a vague knowledge. One must believe that the Governors of this highly civilised but effeminate nation had full solidarity with their own people. But, fortunately, all that happens now in Russia shows that not only Trotzky, but those who are deceived by him and his kind, have nothing in common with the wholesome elements of Russian people and Russian society, although for the moment it does not manifest itself.

On the eve of December 19th His Majesty, after almost ten days' absence, returned from Tsarskoe Selo to the Stafka. His family, except the Tsarevitch, remained in

Tsarskoe Selo. During one of my first audiences I asked the Tsar if he did not consider it desirable, instead of issuing the ordinary New Year order to the Army and Fleet, to give it at once, and to give in this Ukaze the answer to the words of the Kaiser, who apparently was of the opinion that as the beginning of the European War depended upon him at a moment convenient to him, so upon him depended the time for the stopping of the war, consistently with the interests of Germany. The Tsar accepted this suggestion and only asked who would write it. On December 25th, during the ordinary audience I presented to the Tsar a project for an Ukaze, asking him not to sign it at once, but to take it with him and to return it to me on the next day. In addition to this I asked the Tsar to pay special attention to this — that in the order in which were stated the reasons why Russia found it necessary to continue the war, it was said that the vital interests of Russia were bound up with the establishment of free navigation through the Straits of Constantinople and the Dardanelles, and with the intention of Russia to create a free Poland from her three divided provinces. I drew the attention of the Tsar to the fact that the words "free Poland" did not comprise the definition of autonomy, but meant something much greater and much more definite; that in declaring such a Ukaze the Tsar would take upon himself a certain responsibility from which it would be impossible to withdraw. On the same evening the Tsar returned the Ukaze to me, having only made one addition. To the text where the Tsar addressed his troops saying "My Army," the Tsar added the words "And my Fleet." Undoubtedly an unpardonable omission on my part. On the margin of the draft of the Ukaze was the inscription: "To be presented to-morrow for signature."

On the next day, on December 26th, the Tsar, signing the Ukaze, said: "I will sign it December 25th (12th Old Style), because I confirmed it yesterday, and yesterday was 'Saint Spirodony Revolving.' God grant that this Ukaze may be a turning point to the bettering of our military actions." Saint Spirodony is called by the Russian people "Revolving," as on this day, on December 25th, the sun is revolving from winter to summer. This revolvency had not been waiting for long — but in another form, and also in another direction. On the same day the Ukaze was sent to the troops. But it was desired also that our Allies and our enemies should be informed of it at the same time. Translated into the French language the Ukaze was sent the next day to Paris by wireless telegraphy. For this purpose it was necessary to make a correct and also a literal translation. Having no time to occupy myself with this, I invited to my quarters the head of the French Mission, General Janin. His thorough knowledge of the Russian language guaranteed a good translation. Having done the translation he sent it to me. With some insignificant alteration, the Ukaze was made known by wireless to our Allies and to our enemies. By chance I kept the copy of the telegram of December 28th, numbered 144, which was sent from London by our Ambassador, Count Benckendorff, who said: "I am happy to declare that the whole English press speaks fervently and unanimously of the Ukaze given by our Tsar. The impression is unusually deep and beneficial, and nothing could be more fully and better expressed. Confidentially, I had the honour of being received by the King, who expressed to me his fervent and deep satisfaction." Signed: "Benckendorff." But the deepest impression, as far as I know, which the Ukaze produced was on the Polish circles in Russia. The Poles

abroad as well as in Russia saw in the words of such an Ukaze the decision of the Head of the Russian Empire, which could not be withdrawn, in regard to the Polish question, thoroughly dealt with, and to the satisfaction of the Poles. And, moreover, it was in a form to which the Central Powers would never have agreed of their own accord. As a result, some Polish people told me that in several Polish houses the text of the Highest Ukaze was put under glass in a frame and was hung on the wall. Many Poles saw in it a new era for the Polish people. However, events did not yet make it possible for the Polish desire to be realised.

The imperative necessity of initiating measures which would lead to the increase of our forces, in order to lengthen the Russian front, from 1,300 to 1,700 kilometres, involved the calling of a conference of the Commanders-in-Chief to the General Headquarters, as on some questions it was important to hear their opinions and to learn from them when and to what extent these measures could be practically adopted. An exchange of opinions was also necessary, and information had to be obtained which could make it possible in the near future for the High Command to decide the questions as to when, where, and in what measure the advance operations would be planned and carried out. The latter had to agree with the desires and possibilities of our Allies. Now came the hour for calling the second conference, *i.e.* for the question of the supplies and feeding of the Army. In this conference had to take part, not only the officers of the military base, but the representatives of different ministries, especially of Agriculture, and of Ways and Communications. As military operations were largely dependent upon the means provided for their execution, so this latter conference was to be held before the

military conference. Someone from the Tsar's suite told me that about the end of December the Tsar would like to go to Tsarskoe Selo again. However, when I informed the Tsar of the necessity of putting off the conference of Commanders in order to begin first with the military administrative conference, the Tsar did not say a word to lead me to understand that it upset his plans. The economic conference I had arranged for December 27th; it was very large, as it was necessary to invite not only the representatives of all the fronts and branches, but the representatives of the ministries and institutions which were occupied in supplying the Army with everything necessary. It was impossible, on account of other affairs, for me to preside over this Assembly from the beginning to the end, and I had to confine myself to opening the session and arranging the day and the questions which were to be discussed, and after this I had to give over the presidency to the Quartermaster-General at Headquarters, General Egorievsky. Towards the end of the session, he gave me information as to the results of the conference, and again I presided over its close. The conference had settled the foundations for the future agreed action of all the departments interested. The most difficult question calling for decision was the agreement as to the necessities of the Army and the possibility of gradually supplying them. The exigencies of the troops consisted in supplying all provisions without buying any food products in the military zone. In addition, the military stores, almost exhausted during the autumn, needed to be replenished before the beginning of approaching operations. As for the satisfying of 10,000,000 mouths, the figures received were so colossal that the railways would have been unable to cope with the problem. In spite of this it was necessary to decide the question in another way, previously having calcu-

lated what facilities the railways actually offered for transport.

It is necessary to explain why the Intendancy had to provide for the feeding of 10,000,000 people in the military zone, without counting the reserves. The fact was that in these figures were not only included the troops and their bases, but the greater number of other organisations which were staffed by voluntary workers, and partly the inhabitants in the military zone, as well as the refugees living in this region. And lastly, another circumstance which made the number of 10,000,000 seem a little exaggerated was that the Chief of the Administration did not consider the actual number, but the official numbers; that is, those coming under laws and orders. If it were not for this slight exaggeration of the number, and also the possibility for the troops to receive many products in the region which adjoined the military zone, there would be no reason to expect that in spring the necessary base store-houses would not be established, and that it would be possible to satisfy the needs of the Army. Results which were obtained by the exchange of the opinions of all who came to the conference gave the hope that the real needs of the troops would be satisfied in the course of time, and that the arrivals of all necessities for the Army would gradually increase. It was also explained that it was essential that unity and agreement should be arrived at in the activities of the three Ministers upon which the supply of the troops depended — the Ministry of Agriculture, which proposed and obtained the products; the Board of Trade, which regulated the supply and manufacture of some products and above all of coal; and lastly, the Ministry of Ways and Communications, whose work depended upon the action of the second, and with regard to the supply of the Army, upon the first Ministry.

To agree by post in a short time with these Ministries would lead to nothing, and the presence at one time at the General Headquarters of the directors of these three Ministries could not be hoped for. The only thing possible was that at the first opportunity I should go to Petrograd, and there in a personal interview arrange affairs. For this I should have to leave the General Headquarters for some days, and the question arose as to who should be entrusted with the direction of affairs. The first necessity was to appoint the right man as assistant to the Chief of Staff, one who could be trusted, and who would have sufficient knowledge of affairs. It has been already said that after my arrival at the General Headquarters the question of establishing a post of assistant to the Chief of the General Headquarters had been decided and sanctioned by the Tsar. My choice fell on General Klembovsky, at this time Commander of the 11th Army. General Alexeieff approved, which was essential for me. General Klembovsky arrived at Mohileff on December 28th, on the eve of the day appointed for the opening of the conference with the Commanders of the fronts. On the 29th, in the morning after the usual report, I presented him to the Tsar, and after lunch he had to take part in the conference. The past work of General Klembovsky gave him a thorough preparation for the new position. It is sufficient to say that for more than a year he was the Chief of the Staff at the front with General Brussiloff, and during the successful advance of Brussiloff in the summer of 1916. Before this he had commanded a corps; and during the last months he commanded the 11th Army. On the arrival of Klembovsky, I could hand over to him many matters which were not of great importance, but required much time for their decision. That made it possible for me not only to devote more time to more im-

portant questions, but also gave me some rest and enabled me to ride in the environs of Mohileff. No less a relief to my work was the taking of the post of the Quartermaster-General by General Loukomsky. I made this choice also in agreement with General Alexeieff.

The past service of General Loukomsky ensured that he would be, according to the English saying, "The right man in the right place." Before the war he especially occupied himself in preparing the mobilisation of the Russian Army, which under his direction was splendidly carried out. On the appointment of General Shouvaeff as Minister of War, General Loukomsky received and successfully commanded a division of infantry during the war. In his last months he occupied the post of Chief of Staff of an Army. That the choice of these two persons — General Klembovsky and General Loukomsky — was justified was shown by the fact that the Provisional Government appointed them to high positions. They finished their military activity after the unsuccessful attempt of Korniloff to effect a partial *coup d'état;* Klembovsky in the post of Commander-in-Chief of the northern front; Loukomsky as Chief of the General Staff under Korniloff.

As an illustration of the difficulties encountered in carrying out measures for obtaining provisions, and for their supply to the Army, let me mention the following characteristic examples.

The important products, which are the first essential for the soldier, are bread and meat. The difficulty in buying corn arose from this, that the low fixed prices deprived the principal producer, the peasantry, of any profit in supplying the corn for sale. No less a difficulty was the transport of corn from the millons of owners to the railway stations, the more so because of the condition of labour, the

decrease in the number of horses, and the condition of communication, which only allowed the supply of provisions in the winter months by sledges.

The winter months are considered the best for it, but nature, as if in mockery of the calculations of man, did not give the conditions that might enable these institutions to be realised. The winter of 1916 and 1917 in two ways spoilt our plans. First the frost, especially in the corn-producing provinces in December and January, was so hard that the female population — which, in the greater part, was doing the usual work of the peasants — refused to travel with the loaded carts from the villages to the railway stations, as many of these journeys required not hours, but whole days. In addition, in January and February came snow-storms and snow-drifts which prevented, not only the transport of the corn to the station, but the systematic work of the railways. The frost reached 30° and 35° Centigrade. On account of the bad quality of mineral fuel the locomotives were prevented from developing the required power of steam to draw the loaded trucks. These locomotives stopped for hours between two stations to get up sufficient steam to continue their way.

As an illustration of the degree of difficulty in introducing economical measures, the following may serve. By force of circumstances the meat was supplied to the Army, especially in the form of live cattle, even in the beginning of the campaign, from the farther districts of Siberia. Also the waggons, with a capacity of about 16 tons, carried not more than 12–14 head of horned cattle, which after being killed gave not more than 2½ tons of meat. That will serve to show how the work on the railways could have been improved if the meat could have been sent preserved in tins from the places where the live cattle were bought.

Such factories existed before the war, but their output for army purposes was insignificant. The developing of such factories or the construction of cold-storage waggons would have lightened the work of the railways. The difficulty lay mostly in enlarging the existing factories which were manufacturing the tins, or the establishing of new ones. The construction of the refrigerators had already long been decided, but was retarded by the delays in the finishing of the construction of the cold-storage waggons. Here again the slowness of our manufacture was shown in the lack of machinery for the refrigerators.

During this military administrative conference the insufficiency and mistakes in the coal production were glaringly demonstrated and the influence which the quantity of extracted coal had upon the works of railways, and manufactures, and consequently upon the satisfying of all the wants of the Russian Army. During the war the use of coal in the country had greatly increased, the supply from abroad had considerably decreased. On the railways the use of coal especially increased. This was due to the great work of the railways, as well as to the increase of the network of the lines, during these two and a half years of war. The following figures serve to confirm this: from the beginning of the war until January 1917 the extent of new railway lines in the zone under the direction of military staffs and administrations, viz. in the meridian of Archangel, Rjeff, Poltava, more than equalled 6,000 kilometres. The development of station roads on the important junctions and on other stations needed also a little more than 6,000 kilometres of railroad. During twenty years, from 1890 to 1910, 35,000 kilometres of railways, on an average in a year 1,750 kilometres, were constructed in Russia. From 1860 to 1910, 68,000 kilometres were constructed, an

average of 1,360 kilometres per annum. During two years of war from January 1915 to January 1917, 6,800 kilometres of railways were constructed, an average of 3,400. If during twenty years of most intensive construction Russia had built such a number of railways as during the war, at the beginning of the war she would have had double the quantity developed. If one adds to this the great works in the centre of Russia, the construction of a second route through the whole of Siberia instead of the one-line track of the Siberian Railway, and the alteration of the narrow track between Moscow-Archangel to a normal gauge, with the use of heavy rails, and the construction of the Murman Railway which was opened in December 1916, it will be clear what a colossal programme of railway construction was accomplished by the Ministry of Ways and Communications in the centre of Russia and under the direction of the head administration of military communications at the General Headquarters, in the regions of the armies. Great help in construction was given by the railway battalions which were formed according to the instructions of the General Headquarters; with their help was accomplished the exploitation of the railways on the territory of the enemy. They also reconstructed the ruined railway lines and destroyed those which might fall into the hand of the enemy. They were also sent to the centre of the Empire for the hurrying on of the construction of the new lines, or for the management of new ones after being opened. In spite of this the troops and public opinion in the centre of Russia, being ignorant of the difficulties of work on the old lines and the construction of the new was connected and with those obstacles which they had to overcome, always complained of the work of the railways. The cause of it, and not without reason, they saw in the

friction which arose between the Minister of Ways and Communications and the Chief of the Military Communication — in other words, with the General Headquarters. As the complaints against the institution always fall on individuals, there existed among the troops the conviction that the greater part of the blame lay on the Chief of the Military Communications, General Ronjin. General Alexeieff, realising how unjust these complaints were, did not want to deprive himself of the services of Ronjin and did not see sufficient cause for dismissing him.

Having acquainted myself with the position of affairs, and seeing that the relations between the Ministry of Ways and Communications and the administration of Military Communications became strained, and that from this the work suffered, I came to the conclusion not only to replace some persons, but to make a thorough reform. After a personal interview with Trepoff as Minister of Ways and Communications, and after a conference with his Assistant Minister, Voinovsky-Krigier, who soon became the Minister of Ways and Communications, the following bases for the coming reform were made. A new post was created, that of Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Ways and Communications, with residence at the General Headquarters. To him was entrusted the administration of the Military Communications. All his activities were under the instructions of the Chief of the General Staff, and he was consequently under his direction. The Assistant Minister was to be selected from generals who had become well acquainted with the work of the railways during wartime, and Major-General Kisliakoff was chosen. His talents, energy, and capabilities had been shown in the work of different military administrative posts during the campaign, and they served as a pledge that he would realise the previously-mentioned

English saying. Trepoff, of course, wanted to make the personal acquaintance of General Kisliakoff and to confer with him; Voinovsky-Krigier knew him because they had worked together. I knew him well by the reputation of his activity with the troops of the 6th Army Corps and became acquainted with him during the conference on December 27th. Having conferred with General Alexeieff and having received his approbation for the reform, and the appointment of Kisliakoff — not, however, without some doubts on his part — the changes were made. In the month of January I took General Kisliakoff to Tsarskoe Selo. In my presence he made a report to the Tsar of the main reasons for the proposed reform, and spoke about the nature of his future work. Soon after this the order came for his appointment. As is known to me, even General Alexeieff was satisfied with his work, he who always feared that the absolute power over the work of the roads at the front would slip from the hands of the Chief of the General Staff. Just as well satisfied were all the next Commanders and their Chiefs of Staff, who came after the upheaval in the Empire.

General Kisliakoff, in the opinion of the Provisional Government and the Councils, became implicated in the August plot of Korniloff. He was suspected and arrested. His further fate is not known to me. Did he succeed, like the other generals who were arrested for the same cause with Korniloff, in escaping, was he free before this, or is he still deprived of liberty while waiting for what is even now still called the "tribunal of justice"?

On January 28th the Military Administrative Conference ended. Some measures approved by the Conference which had to be carried out I intended to explain to the Commanders-in-Chief in case of some objection on their

side, and to explain the motives which necessitated their fulfilment. Some of them undoubtedly were detrimental to the interests of the Army, but the stern necessity and the available means helped to reconcile them to this disadvantage, and to take measures in order that they should not impair the military action of the troops, nor prevent the accomplishment of plans which had as their aim the preparation of the intended offensive in the spring on all fronts.

CHAPTER XXI

PREPARATIONS FOR THE OFFENSIVE IN 1917 — THE MURDER OF RASPUTIN

I FIXED December 29th, 1916, for the conference of the Commanders-in-Chief, and this was confirmed by the Emperor. In my preliminary reports to the Emperor I placed before him questions for consideration at the conference, so that their adoption in time should not meet with objections from the Commanders-in-Chief responsible for their fulfilment. Besides which I placed a list of those who were to take part in the conference before the Emperor. The Emperor reminded me that I must not forget to invite the late Commander-in-Chief of the south-western front, General Ivanoff.

The conference was composed of the following: besides the Emperor and myself, as the Emperor's Chief of Staff, were invited three Commanders-in-Chief, and, as General Saharoff could not come, his representative General Belaieff, who was sent in August to the Roumanian King as representative for the Russian Army; Admiral Roussin, Chief of the Naval Staff at headquarters; General Ivanoff; the Minister of War, Shouvaeff; the Grand Duke Serge as the person at the head of supplies and the new formations of artillery; and, finally, General Klembovsky, who had just been appointed my assistant. The Commanders-in-Chief were accompanied by their Chiefs of Staff.

The principal question to be discussed at the conference

was that of the forthcoming offensive operations. It was necessary to decide when the operations would take place, on what front, and what forces would be necessary or could be used.

News had already been received from France that our Allies, wishing to keep the initiative of the 1917 campaign in their hands, thought that operations should be commenced during the winter of 1916–17. As I have already said, they were convinced that for the Russian Army this was the very best time to advance, taking the climate into consideration. It was supposed that the Italian Army by this time would be ready for an advance. Of course, active operations ought to quieten down during the spring thaws, so that in summer they might be more fully developed.

Weighty considerations impelled us to acquiesce in the decision, which was arrived at during the November 1916 conference at Chantilly — but on the other hand, due to reasons already mentioned and to recent examples, a winter campaign under conditions of our climate could not bring success with it.

At the conference the following compromise was adopted: If the Allies did actually make a winter advance in January or February, we were to prepare for active operations on every front, but comparatively small in extent, and with small forces. The obstacle to a wide development of the operations at this time was that we had not sufficient reserves and the fear that if we made a large expenditure of shells the stocks would be depleted for our chief spring operations. Without doubt the main question for the conference to discuss was on which front to operate and what forces we could have for the summer advance. For this we should need a sufficient quantity of material and a sufficient number of tactical units of every branch of infantry and artillery.

More than once I have mentioned that the extending of our front about 400 kilometres exhausted nearly all the reserves of all the three fronts. I must add that it was fortunate that the majority of the reserves had been concentrated on the south-western front at the end of 1916, *i.e.* comparatively near to the new Roumanian front. It is doubtful whether our railways could have carried a large number of army corps in time from the more distant fronts.

It was also proposed to the Commanders-in-Chief to discuss the question of the diminution of the cavalry on our European theatre of war by diminishing the number of cavalry attached to Army Corps, as such shrinkage would also in some degree facilitate the work of the Commissary of Stores in supplying the forage.

This cavalry could have been used with greater advantage in the other theatre of war. To every corps was attached either one separate Cossack regiment or "sotnia" (composed of about two hundred men) from the second reserve. But when the army entered into positional warfare, these regiments had hardly any military importance. Their service lay especially in communication and military administration. It was intended to group these regiments into divisions, four or five in number, and to send them to the Caucasian Army. It was proposed by this means to strengthen by their arrival the detachment of General Baratoff, which was acting in Persia, in order that the latter could give more real help to the English Army which was operating in Mesopotamia in the direction of Bagdad. The idea of giving more help to our Ally, England, very much pleased the Tsar, and he was interested in the scheme with regard to taking advantage of these divisions in the Persian theatre of war. During the winter the Cossack regiments were transferred to the Province of the Troops

of the Don and partly to the Caucasus and grouped into a division of 24 " sotnias "; these divisions also began to form infantry battalions. The unexpected outbreak of the Russian Revolution prevented the realisation of this plan.

The Commanders-in-Chief were given the following scheme to create new units, *e.g.* to take one battalion from each of the eight infantry regiments in every two divisional army corps; add to these eight battalions four battalions, taking from the old regiments whole companies instead of these companies, to form new ones in the old regiments. Out of the twelve battalions was to be formed a four-regiment division. In this the old sixteen-battalion division naturally would revert to twelve-battalion divisions made up of four regiments each. In this way, in round figures, sixty Russian army corps, composed of two divisions of thirty-two battalions, became Army Corps of three divisions each, totalling thirty-six battalions. Further, on the northern and western fronts by this time had to be formed twelve divisions of sixteen battalions each by bringing military troops into their composition. Already in the spring of 1916 each cavalry division had attached to it an infantry battalion composed of three foot squadrons.

The new proposal was to convert these battalions into a three-battalioned rifle regiment, leaving it as part of the composition of the regular cavalry or Cossack division. In order to get the complement of officers and men simultaneously, each cavalry regiment was to revert from a six- to a four-squadron unit. At first it was proposed that this measure should be applied to the Cossacks, assuming that the regular cavalry would be able to spare enough officers and men from the reserve regimental ranks to form these infantry battalions, without the intervention of this new scheme. However, at General Brussiloff's motion, the con-

ference found it possible to apply it to all cavalry. The plan for reforming a division of sixteen battalions into one of twelve battalions did not meet with opposition from the members of the conference and was confirmed by the Emperor. The time it would take to execute this radical change naturally compelled us to decide the main advance for the beginning of the summer of 1917.

This step gave the Russian Army, in round figures, about 500 new battalions, or sixty new divisions, and about forty infantry regiments with the cavalry. Such an army increase involved the bringing into life of new divisional and regimental staffs, the necessity of pouring into the army enormous reinforcements, and the most difficult problem of forming new troop transports, the latter partly at the cost of slightly lessening the existing regimental and divisional ones. This reform was actively commenced immediately, and in many of the divisions on the north-western and south-western fronts — notwithstanding the riotous revolutionary times of March — they were little to be distinguished from the old divisions. The most difficult problem was on the Roumanian front, where the Russian troops continued fighting till the end of January 1917, and the reform did not commence until two months later.

The weak point was the impossibility of attaching its own artillery to the new divisions. The remedy for this position we had to search for in this way: as the new army corps of three divisions had only two artillery brigades, it was necessary that the artillery during trench warfare should remain permanently in the firing line — which, I am sorry to say, was often the case before. Of three infantry divisions, two could be in the front lines, and the third as reserve of the army corps. The periodical changing of the divisions gave the infantry time to rest from trench life and to un-

dergo a much more regular training. This position of affairs would be only a temporary one.

The formation of new artillery brigades and separate artillery battalions of field and mortar artillery had to be intensively proceeded with. As the artillery brigade and separate artillery battalions were formed they were added to the new infantry divisions, because the chief difficulty in forming batteries was not so much the shortage in guns as of all the rest of artillery materials, and supply by horses. Therefore the Commanders-in-Chief had the proposal placed before them to form so-called "position batteries," the commands and guns to be taken from the rear, the bringing up of ammunition and everything else to be done by the artillery commanders. Such batteries it was proposed to place on passive areas, *i.e.* those points which were seldom attacked by the enemy, and were little adapted for our advance. The cavalry divisions, the fighting strength of which for infantry fighting had been increased almost three times, were to receive mortar battalions of eight guns in the near future. These guns were coming from England and were 4.5 inch howitzers.

But the main increase in our artillery for future operations was to be by the heavy artillery, of calibres of 6, 8, 10, 11, and 12 inches, which we expected to receive from our Allies. Their arrival at the front was expected not earlier than May, another weighty reason why our main active operations should not commence earlier than the end of May. At the conference all the reasons for and against the advance on this or that front were discussed; but for the final decision as to which front would be chosen for the main operations and which would be secondary, it was decided that the Commanders-in-Chief of the army groups should be given special orders not later than towards the

end of January from the Generalissimo when he should have all details in hand, and would be in a position to make his final decision on the various alternatives placed before him.

The most essential questions placed before the conference were decided on the 29th in two meetings with a break for dinner. On the 30th, when the usual reports to the Emperor were made, which I confided to General Klembovsky with General Loukomsky, the conference assembled, with myself as President, to discuss various secondary questions which did not require the Emperor's consent. The Emperor came to the conference after he had received the usual reports. After an interval for lunch the conference met again. It was quite clear the day before that the work might be finished next day, which would give the Emperor the opportunity of leaving that day for Tsarskoe Selo.

During the interval, before going to the palace for lunch, I went to my own quarters on some business that required haste, and here my adjutant, Arngold, informed me that there were rumours in Mohileff that Rasputin had been murdered, but so many false reports about him were going round that I attached no importance to this communication. Before sitting down to table the Emperor called me on one side to agree about the conference, and in what spirit he would address the closing words. To what he told me I had nothing to object. The conference recommenced soon after lunch and business was completed about three-quarters of an hour before the Imperial train was due to leave Mohileff. In full conviction that the Emperor would retire to the palace where the Tsarevitch would be waiting for him, I went to the Staff to sign some urgent telegrams handed me by Loukomsky. He repeated to me the

Mohileff rumours of Rasputin's murder. Arriving at the station some twenty minutes before the train was leaving, I found the Emperor walking up and down with General Voeikoff on the platform. The day was frosty and windy, and it was unpleasant to stand still. I heard afterwards that Voeikoff had already spoken to the Emperor about the event, which was to have such tremendous results in Russia's fate; the murder of Rasputin in Petrograd. After my arrival on the platform, the Emperor walked up and down with me until the train started. I proposed going to Petrograd in the near future for the purpose of regulating various commissariat questions, as also questions connected with the Inter-Ally Conference which was shortly expected in Petrograd. I informed the Emperor of my intention and received his sanction. I told him that General Klembovsky would undertake my duties when I left, and I asked his permission, in case of urgency, to come to Tsarskoe Selo from Petrograd. I had no belief in this Rasputin murder, and that was possibly why I did not attempt to define the state of the spirit of the Emperor. All the same, I must say I noticed nothing different in the Emperor's manner, either at the closing of the conference or on the platform — although he had heard the news at the time.

During my four months' stay as Chief of Staff there were few questions in Russian public life, either home or foreign, that I did not touch on with the Emperor. The only question that on principle I did not wish to raise, the only name I always refrained from mentioning before the Emperor, was that of the so-called monk Rasputin. And a sufficient reason for this was that when once this question was opened, I should have to fathom it to the bottom, to investigate fully all the details founded on absolute facts — and not on

rumours. I could not speak of what I had only heard; the stories from others were so various, so contrary, now and then so absurd, as to make it impossible to determine where the truth began and where invention ended.

Having returned to Headquarters from the station where the Commanders-in-Chief were meeting under General Klembovsky, I continued the gathering, which lasted all the evening, after which all the Commanders-in-Chief left for their respective Headquarters.

There was one other important question discussed, and that was the number of reinforcements in men the armies would require during 1917. The forecast as drawn up at Headquarters not long before I arrived, and the communication made to the Minister of War did not satisfy me; it astonished me by its excessiveness. The calculations were made on a loss of 500,000 each summer month, and on 150,000 during the six months of comparative quiet, *i.e.* a little less than 4,000,000 reinforcements in one year. At that time there were in the reserve being trained just under 2,000,000, and in the early spring of 1917 recruits to the extent of 700,000 were expected — this would give about 2,500,000. On this basis they concluded that they would have to call some 1,500,000 from the population. The Ministries of the Interior, Agriculture, and Trade, having made themselves conversant with these figures, gave notice that such a new conscription of recruits would fall heavily on all the country's life, on its trade production for the Army, and they counted it impossible to agree with such demands. One would have thought that the three campaigns, viz. 1914–1915 (we had no winter rest), the summers of 1915, and 1916, could have provided figures to work out the yearly loss which the Russian Army was bearing. Because of that same supposition that the cam-

paign would be a short one, the Ministry of War had made no precise calculations.

We had to decide this question by a different method, and by various means. In round figures it was known that more than 14,000,000 had been called to the colours up to December, 1916, whilst the Commissariat was supplying something under 10,000,000. The difference in the figures constitute the Army's loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners and missing. A partial confirmation of these figures of killed, wounded and prisoners was got by taking lists issued by the Minister of War for the Emperor. Other calculations made up, however, of rough figures brought the figures practically to the same, viz. 4,500,000 losses in the three campaigns. Working from these figures, I proposed limiting ourselves to calling up new recruits of nineteen years of age in the spring of 1917 and a monthly flow of healed sick and wounded, counting them as from 50,000 to 60,000 monthly. I must say that rumours were circulating obstinately amongst the Russian general public and in Council circles that the numbers of deserters hiding away in the villages reached the enormous figure of from 1,000,000 to 2,000,000. The same calculations and a comparison of the number taken from the population with those actually serving showed that this figure was in any case exaggerated. Of course the number of soldiers arriving from the armies, and living in the interior or travelling by railway, was temporarily enormous; from 1915, leave was granted to men fluctuating between 2 per cent. to 5 per cent. of the composing bodies. Consequently there were times when 500,000 men were on leave. Adding these to the wounded who had received permission to go to their villages before joining up, the various men that were sent on business to the interior, and you have such colossal figures of men tem-

porarily living at home or moving by railway, that it is not astonishing that legends about the number of desertions had got round.

Concerning proposed activities for 1917 in agreement with our Allies, it was decided that if the Allies made an advance in the second half of the winter, we should prepare earlier for, and undertake, active operations on every front on a comparatively small sector of fifteen to twenty kilometres, not intending to penetrate the enemy's positions very deeply. The idea of such operations was to hold the Austro-German troops whose positions were on their east front. When our Allies made their spring advance, we were to prepare for an advance, using the largest possible quantity of materials and putting into the operations the largest possible number of army corps. Such operations were to be conducted on all four fronts; the final choice of the front for our main blow would be given somewhat later, so as to preclude the news, either by spying or patrols, as much as possible from being known or guessed at by our enemies. Not less than three-quarters of all the heavy artillery already formed or going to be formed during the winter of 1916–17 was to be sent to the front where the main blow was to be delivered. Soon the 48th Army Corps was formed of this artillery and placed under the command of General Sheideman, whom I mentioned in connection with the active operations around Dvinsk. The speciality of this new army corps consisted of its fighting ranks being composed entirely of artillery; otherwise it approximated to the ordinary army corps.

On the next day, December 31st, the final confirmation of the news of Rasputin's murder was received. I can certainly say that this news convinced everybody that the political atmosphere would be considerably cleared. People

thought that this murder would remove one of the main causes which gave rise to every possible kind of absurd rumour that was agitating the nation. What happened was rather the reverse. This murder, in fact, gave an impetus to the larger internal disturbances, and to the yet wider circulation of every kind of absurd rumour attaching to this name. The murder of Rasputin was such a serious event that I had to put off my journey to Petrograd, the more so as, for reasons not influenced by us, the Inter-Ally Conference was put off till the middle of January 1917.

My ideas were these: My journey to the capital would be the first one that any Chief of Staff had made from the outset of the campaign, as the Headquarters Chief of Staff, not having an assistant familiar with all the business, could not possibly be absent from the Headquarters even for a few days. Even a direct telephone line, that was only put up in November 1916, would not be sufficient. I was afraid that my arrival in Petrograd might be associated with Rasputin's murder. And if for some reason or other, during my short stay in Petrograd, I had not been able to see the Emperor — and just then there were no special military reasons why I should — then this might be misinterpreted as a breach in the normal relations beween the Chief of Staff and the Generalissimo. Such an idea might have very much worse consequences if in course of time it was circulated amongst the troops. I had to put off my journey till the New Year (old style), when I left for Petrograd.

CHAPTER XXII

POLITICAL CHANGES IN PETROGRAD

SOON after the Emperor arrived in Tsarskoe Selo several incidents took place which had a serious significance in home politics. The President of the Council of Ministers, A. F. Trepoff, asked for the second time to be relieved of his post. On this occasion his resignation was accepted. The chief motive for his resignation he gave was the awkward position he was placed in before the Imperial Duma, having promised many of its members — and not succeeded — to change several Ministers, amongst whom was the Minister of the Interior, Protopopoff.

After the November session of the Imperial Duma was opened, it was clear that co-operative work between the Imperial Duma and the Minister of the Interior, Protopopoff, was out of the question. It is enough to say that not once did Protopopoff dare mount the tribune in the Duma. He avoided coming within the walls. A. F. Trepoff was succeeded by Prince Golitzin, and then the session was ended and a new session was appointed for the end of February. The cessation of the Duma could be explained by the circumstance that the new President of the Council of Ministers, Prince Golitzin, before he made his opening speech, and before he investigated the projected legislation, desired to make himself acquainted with current business. Prince Golitzin's nomination was not expected either by the circles of the Russian Government or by the politicians. Prince Golitzin had previously been a most ordinary Gov-

ernor of Archangel and Tver, before the first Revolution in 1905. From the time he became a Senator he took no active part in the political life of the country. Naturally in Petrograd there was much talk as to the reason why the Emperor had chosen Prince Golitzin. The majority were inclined to attribute it to the fact that he was known to the Empress, as a member of the so-called Tatiana Committee and of the committee for helping the Russian prisoners in Germany. The first of these committees, formed to look after the fate of the families of persons who had suffered from the war, was presided over by the Grand Duchess Tatiana, the Empress's favourite daughter; the second was presided over by the Empress herself.

Public opinion expressed astonishment that such an important post should be given to a man with little experience, who had never had any connection with the Duma circles, having abandoned administrative work; all the same it was acknowledged that he had the advantage of an honest, orderly, well-meaning character, combined with a passionate patriotism, all splendid qualities in a citizen. Many were pleased that Protopopoff had not been nominated to the post of Prime Minister. Soon after his nomination it was said of Golitzin that he intended to use all his influence to have Protopopoff replaced by some other person. In this he reckoned on being able to influence the Empress, as he saw her not only as Prime Minister, but was a member of the above-mentioned committees. This intention he told me, and I have no reason to suppose that actually he did not intend to carry it out.

The other incident full of significance was the appointment of General Belaieff as Minister of War instead of Shouvaeff. Since August 1916 General Belaieff had been representing the Russian Army at King Ferdinand of

Roumania's Headquarters. When General Saharoff was given a post as King Ferdinand's assistant, General Belaieff's position was done away with. The last business Belaieff had at this point was when he came as representative of General Saharoff to the conference of Commanders-in-Chief at Headquarters in December 1916. Before the war and during mobilisation he was one of the assistant chiefs of the General Staff, and had something to do with making out the so-called small and large programmes for increasing the armies. The splendid results of the mobilisation gained him the reputation of being a talented desk worker. On this foundation, even in November 1915, stubborn rumours circulated that in case General Polivanoff left the post of Minister of War the choice of his successor would fall on Belaieff, and that the Prime Minister, J. L. Goremykin, naturally favoured this idea.

Quite accidentally I arrived in Petrograd about the end of November 1915, for two days' stay, the only time throughout the war until December 1916. Being personally well acquainted with J. L. Goremykin, I thought it necessary to visit him and enlighten him as to what General Belaieff had done as a soldier and administrator. I remember that having given General Belaieff the praise due to him for his conscientious work connected with the mobilisation I compared his appointment to the Ministry of War with the appointment to the post of Minister of Finance of a very expert bookkeeper, knowing the routine of account keeping, but completely ignorant of financial science. I could not but give the requisite appreciation of the conscientiousness and orderliness of the extraordinarily methodical workmanship of General Belaieff and his knowledge of the routine of Cabinet Administration work. At the same time I pointed out the evidence of many deficiencies

for a man holding a high post. Besides that he had no authority among the commanders of troops. During his visit to Headquarters in December 1916, the matter of his further service came up. He himself asked to be given active service, reckoning that he would be given the command of an army corps. As he had had no experience of serious fighting in fighting commands, I thought that it would be quite sufficient if he was appointed to the command of an infantry division. In this strain I spoke of him to the Emperor, who, on saying good-bye to General Belaieff when he was leaving with a report of the conference at Headquarters for General Saharoff, told him of his decision to give him the command of a division. Soon after the Emperor left Mohileff, about January 2nd, I received a telegram from him in accordance with which General Belaieff was immediately to proceed to Petrograd and appear before the Emperor. At first I did not attach any significance to this telegram, and it was only after some time had passed that the thought struck me that Belaieff was being called to take up some administrative post. But it never entered my brain that he was to be appointed Minister of War in Petrograd. In this the Empress's influence was obvious, for she had known Belaieff through the same committees through which she knew Prince Golitzin.

No less wonderment was caused amongst the Petrograd Government and public by the cessation of the Duma's activities. This fact might have been considered perfectly natural, in view of the changes amongst the Government heads, if stubborn rumours had not been circulating as to the further work of the law-giving institutions, as to its relations with the Minister of the Interior, Protopopoff, who, in fact, was aiming finally at the administration of the

country without the aid of the Duma or Imperial Council. Having received telegraphic permission from the Emperor for my journey to Petrograd, on my arrival I first of all tried to arrange a meeting with such persons as Prince Golitzin, the new Minister of Ways and Communications, Voinovsky-Krigier, the Minister of Agriculture, Rittich, and the War Minister, Belaieff. I considered it valueless to waste time in conversing with the Minister Protopopoff, so I merely called and left my card. What I wanted most was a long, confidential talk with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, N. N. Pokrovsky, on the coming Inter-Ally Conference. Trepoff was to have been President of this Conference whilst holding the post of Prime Minister. Evidently the Emperor was to hand this duty over to Prince Golitzin. In any case Prince Golitzin himself told me that when he tried to dissuade the Emperor from appointing him Prime Minister, one of the arguments he used was the difficulties entailed for him in presiding over the Inter-Ally Conference. After mentioning the subject to me, Prince Golitzin willingly agreed to Pokrovsky, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, being appointed President of this Conference. We agreed that I should make my report to the Emperor to this effect. During the interview Prince Golitzin explained that he fully understood the danger, not only if the Imperial Duma was dismissed, but even if the session should be suspended and especially if for an indefinite time.

On my arrival in the capital I shortly met with Pokrovsky. At our lengthy conversation we agreed as to the preparatory work for the conference, of his willingness to be President, and the calling of a preliminary meeting to fix a programme of work for the Inter-Ally Conference. At this meeting it was agreed that the opening welcome to

the members of the Conference was to be spoken by Pokrovsky. Afterwards I was to address the members of the Conference on the reasons for it and the fundamental principles on which its activities must be followed. I had further to point out to them the necessity of bringing a stricter application to business of the principle fixed at the Paris Conference in 1916. I had to speak of the unity of the common interests and of more equable distribution of the material means which the Allies had at their disposal for the purpose of attaining the common purpose.

I took advantage of my conversation with Pokrovsky to open up the subject of the Poles and the Slavonic nations generally, the more so because Prince Golitzin had informed me that the Emperor had expressed a wish to him that a meeting of some of the high political officials and civil authorities should be called under his presidency to arrive at a common agreement on a final decision of the Polish question.

Not less important for the Slavonic question was the correct attitude on the Czech question, which I am sorry to say did not get a decision in accordance with the wishes of the Czech National Council. With one of its members, M. R. Stefànic, I had already had a detailed conversation, and agreed on the fundamental issues of the Czech problem, especially of the first concrete steps, viz. the formation of volunteer Czech troops. Not less satisfactory were my interviews with the Ministers of Agriculture and Ways and Communications; with the latter we determined the main activities of General Kisliakoff, the object of which was before anything else the co-ordination of the interior railway lines and the lines at the fronts. From the Minister of Agriculture I learnt the results of his journeys throughout Russia, the success of the measures taken to increase

the quantities of grain brought to the railway stations, and especially to the river wharfs. All the Government Zemstvos of the grain-growing Governments wherever he went were fully ready to assist him. The collection of grain at the river wharfs secured the food supplies for the Army, the capitals and the munition works centres for the whole of the spring thaw and the spring field work, the period when the peasants stopped delivery of grain to the railway stations. From the Minister's words, it appeared that the transport of grain to several stations had been so large that those holding powers of attorney from the Ministry of Agriculture had been obliged to stop the peasants sending the grain as there was not sufficient closed storage, and on account of the shortage in railway trucks to transport the grain from the station to the army warehouses. In general the grain-purchase picture seemed a very satisfactory one.

But in the next months this position of affairs was considerably altered, the reasons being purely due to nature. Extraordinarily heavy frosts were experienced in January by the members of the Inter-Ally Conference, both during their stay in Petrograd and whilst they were visiting the fronts. In February blizzards were added to the frost, and snow drifts stopped movements on whole railway lines and in the grain-growing districts.

The day after I had left my card for Protopopoff, my adjutant Arngold reported to me that a message had been received by telephone in Protopopoff's name, asking when I could receive him. Not only had I no reason to refuse such a meeting, but I was interested to know why Protopopoff had to change his attitude to me, and now wished to have what I had to think was a business talk with me. Our

meeting took place next day in my apartment at the Hotel Astoria, where I was staying this time. At the beginning of the war various rumours were circulating about this hotel, which is built on the Isaac Square, opposite to the German Embassy. It was found that it had been built with German capital and was managed by German agents and possible spies. An opinion existed that every German subject and German agent when abroad is obliged to help the German General Staff in discovering all that is passing in neighbouring countries, whether occupied by friends, allies, or possible enemies. As a consequence of this the hotel was requisitioned, and its administration was taken over by officers of the Reserve. It was specially meant for military people arriving from the armies on service work, or for short leave. The majority of those staying there were from the armies or from abroad, in addition to diplomats in Petrograd.

In receiving Protopopoff my idea was to give him an opportunity to say all he wished. There was no difficulty in this, as during our two-hour conversation he almost exclusively held the floor. Not very long before our interview someone told me that he had said he had hopes of gaining me to his side without much trouble, and maybe as one of his own people. What he meant by this they could not tell me, but it is reasonable to suppose, if his words were repeated to me correctly, that they meant he hoped to persuade me into agreeing with the rectitude of his home politics and possibly of foreign politics. In the course of our two-hour conversation, however, he did not touch on military or foreign policy. I must mention that he was not a member of the Inter-Ally Conference. If these questions closely interested him, he could without much diffi-

culty have asked the Emperor to appoint him one of the conference members. As far as I know, he never made any attempts in this direction.

Shortly, his future political programme was this: The Government, as he expressed it, must hinge their interior policy on the industrial centres, but not on those that "earn rouble for rouble," but only those that "earn copeck for copeck." I added to this, "shop-keepers!" He foresaw in the early future that the Imperial Duma would not be satisfied with his home politics, and all that remained to be done would be to prorogue its Sessions. Protopopoff thought nevertheless that it would be necessary for a date to be given, owing to the Imperial Edict for opening the Duma. Further he foresaw that it would be necessary to close the Duma and to announce new elections, which, in his opinion, would take not less than six months.

Having listened to his radical programme, I answered him somewhat hotly. I said that this meant his playing a game of "*va banque,*" and asked from whom he had received the authority to play such a game, who guaranteed him that the country would passively wait for new elections or for the reopening of the Duma. Evidently my remarks took him quite by surprise, for, without allowing me to finish what I had to say, Protopopoff interrupted, agreeing with me that it certainly was a game of "*va banque,*" of "breaking the bank." To my question whether he acknowledged what sort of stake he put in for his game, he drew in and, evidently understanding that he had gone too far, interrupted me, "Yes, well; I must think over this carefully again." In parting, amongst other amiabilities, of which he was not at all sparing, he expressed the hope that our conversation would not be the last one; reminding me that we had met in our early youth, and that we

should understand each other as time went on. Actually this long conversation was our first and last. On my next visits to the capital he never sought a conversation with me. His idea of the methods for home politics was sufficiently decisive, but at the same time too risky, as he evidently acknowledged to himself. And to me they seemed so significant that I thought it my duty at my first interview to tell the Emperor as nearly as possible the full conversation I had had with Protopopoff, adding that Protopopoff must realise that, having decided on this game of "*va banque,*" as a stake to it he was using the interests of the Crown, the dynasty, and the very existence of Russia; that there might be various opinions as to Protopopoff's moral qualities, but it was impossible for there to be two opinions as to the extent of his lightness of mind, when he thought it right to gamble in government business. Evidently the Emperor was very much astonished at what I had told him, but expressed no doubt as to the correctness of my transmission to him of this conversation, and did not think it necessary to invite Protopopoff to come and, in his presence, prove the correctness of what I had told him.

Having finished my business in Petrograd, I hurried to return to Headquarters, having previously gone to Tsarskoe Selo to see the Emperor and report. Here I found that the Tsarevitch was obliged to stay in bed owing to his health, and in consequence the return to Headquarters was put off. In our conversation the Emperor asked if it was absolutely necessary for him to return to Headquarters. Receiving my reply that he had already confirmed the work for the winter, and that there was no reason for foreseeing any serious war operations, the Emperor said, "If my presence at Headquarters is necessary, inform me." Then the Emperor said, "If I do not come to Headquarters, in any case

I can count on seeing you when you come to Petrograd for the Inter-Ally Conference."

Soon after returning to Mohileff I received a telegram from General Russky, that he had authorised General Ratko-Dmitrieff, the Commander of the 12th Army, to begin a local advance to the south of the Lake Babith. Such a telegram very much astonished me. Generals Klembovsky and Loukomsky and I examined the protocols made at the conference of Commanders-in-Chief. They came to this, that local advances on our various fronts would only be undertaken in the event of our Allies on their side opening up active war operations during January or February; and that such operations should be held back by us as much as possible. Consequently the independent advance of the 12th Army was entirely out of plan. Seemingly it would have been natural to remind General Russky of the decisions made at the conference, and to order him to cancel this advance, which, as yet, evidently had not commenced. But I had to take into consideration a combination of quite another order. During the past ten months on the boundaries of the northern front at several points preparations had been made for advances, and with the exception of one of them they had been countermanded. There was no doubt, then, that a new counter-order would have a very bad effect on all the troops on the northern front, and, on the other hand, all data to hand gave strong hopes that this proposed advance on the Riga salient would be successful. Of course we could have postponed it until such time as the Allies intended advancing. But then we should have had to take into consideration that such an advance, postponed and then reordered, would have become known to the Germans, whereas General Ratko-Dmitrieff's chief hopes for its success was in its being a surprise. That was why the in-

formation of this proposed operation had only been received from General Russky on the eve of the actual advance being made. It would have been useful to have asked General Russky the reasons of this order, evidently contrary to the decisions of the conference. This latter might have become known, if only to the senior executors of the advance of the 12th Army, and might have been understood by them to mean that Headquarters were against any decisions to undertake winter advances. This in its turn might have had a bad moral influence on the senior chiefs, and through them have affected the activities of their juniors and troops.

I have gone into the details of this episode because I wished to show what complicated reasons have to be taken into consideration in giving battle instruction. Especially is this the case in those circumstances when such instruction will not only affect the activities of the troops, but also react on the psychology of the Chiefs, who in their turn unknowingly, we may call it mechanically, pass it on to the troops under them. This at all times has had, and will have in the future, the greatest importance in military matters. No perfecting of mechanical contrivances used by nations for mutual destruction does away with the moral element in troops and its influence on their fighting capabilities. One must not forget that all mechanical fighting and destroying appliances are brought into action by men exposed to moral influences. In the near future I had no occasion to see General Russky, and to this day I do not know under what pretext (or only misunderstanding perhaps) he authorised General Ratko-Dmitrieff to make his advance at the beginning of January. This advance, coming as a complete surprise to the Germans, produced good results at the outset. Enemy positions, prisoners, machine guns,

whole batteries of light and heavy artillery were captured. The tactical defensive position of the Riga salient was bettered by the capture of the near bend of the German defensive lines, which were deep within our positions to the south of Lake Babith on the left shore of the River Aa. But several days later our successes were stopped, and in places our units gave up the captured German third-line positions. This is quite explicable, and for the following reasons. Firstly, the frozen earth heavily hampered our troops in digging in or in making the captured German positions suitable for defence. And then the frozen earth makes it more difficult to destroy the German works. Consequently, by a successful counter-attack the enemy gains well-fortified trenches suitable to beat off our next attacks. The other reason that made the 12th Army struggle difficult was that everything was quiet on all the European fronts. This made it possible for the Germans to bring up as many reserves as they wished to the Riga front, being in no danger of weakening the other front reserves. If this advance had been undertaken simultaneously with advances made on all the other Russian fronts, and our Allies' fronts, there were great chances of these preliminary successes being developed farther. The above-mentioned reasons were not sufficiently known, or not sufficiently appreciated by the reading public, amongst whom were those who formed public opinion in Petrograd. Rumours in town, stated as coming from the wounded from the Riga front, alleged that at one time our troops had taken Mitau, but that for reasons unknown they had been ordered to retire from there. When, subsequently, it was substantiated that we had only moved forward several kilometres, and had not reached Mitau by a long way, explanations were sought as to why our successes had not had the required development. In Petrograd absurd

rumours were circulated that the Empress Alexandra personally telegraphed, without Headquarters or General Russky knowing, for the advance of the Russian troops in the Mitau direction to be stopped. One must be entirely ignorant of either Russian morals, of army rules, or even of the formalities observed by the Empress in talking to any persons outside her immediate suite, to allow even the possibility of a proceeding of this sort coming from her.

This showed how public opinion was inclined to regard the Empress capable of doing anything which might be harmful to the success of our military operations. Here, however, it is possible to believe in an evil motive, in circulating false rumours with intent. In this sense I remember the following incident. Someone knowing that the Empress Alexandra was at the head of such-and-such a committee, helping such-and-such prisoners, made a direct petition, asking her to turn her attention to the heavy conditions under which German prisoners in several cases lived and worked. If I am not mistaken this applied to German prisoners working on the building and upkeep of the Murman Railway. Having grasped the contents of this application with the help of her private secretary, Count Rostovtseff, the Empress was convinced that this in no way concerned her, as she was the head of a committee that only dealt with Russian prisoners in Germany, and she ordered Rostovtseff to send this application on to the department in the General Staff administration dealing with war prisoners subjects of nations at war with us.

Soon after came officious remarks in the newspapers, reminding people of this interference in favour of German prisoners, and further announcing that this note was received from the Empress's secretary. The remarks conveyed the impression that the Empress was interested in

the fate of the German prisoners, and had even used her influence to stand up for them. Soon after this there were explanations and refutations in the newspapers, but their fate was the same as that which the majority of such refutations get. Few people in general read them, and still less those who at the time have read the matter which was being refuted or altogether denied. The matter was followed up, but it was not made plain whether the remarks had been made under a misunderstanding, or with intent to undo still further the Emperor's Consort's prestige. But voluntarily or involuntarily this and other remarks had their consequences. Throughout the whole of the world persistent rumours were circulated that the Empress had German sympathies, and proofs were given of this. Knowing that in my conversation with the Emperor I often touched on home politics, many people, amongst others Count Frederiks, Minister of the Court, advised me to have a personal interview with the Empress, and through her to have certain decisions accepted. I knew that several people already, amongst them those intimate with her, had tried to have conversations with her on politics, but without success. It would have been a presumption on my part for me to reckon that I, a person completely unknown to her personally, should be able to obtain that which had not been attained by people whose relations with her would place them without the pale of her doubts. Further, this would have required several lengthy personal interviews. I could not foresee any conclusive results from such conversations, and a negative result might easily be the outcome, if, as was probable, they had become known. Not seeing any kind of fundamental change in home politics, naturally the town would talk and would interpret my constant visits to the Empress in no other way except as a desire on her part

to exercise influence on the war operations, or perhaps even my wish to bring her into the active circles of the higher military command. Such rumours would, without doubt, penetrate to the troops in the active army, and the consequences of such rumours, to refute which would have been impossible, might be very harmful. I had to protect, not my personal prestige and not my personal reputation as a private individual, but my prestige as a person of authority, although only temporarily holding the post of Chief of Staff at Headquarters. Truly such rumours would have been directly opposite to the absurd tales with many variations which with one accord were being repeated in the Petrograd drawing-rooms, as possibly also in the servants' rooms. It was said that at the time I was reporting to the Emperor in his cabinet the Empress came in and in consequence I stopped my report. On the Emperor saying that he had no secrets from the Empress, I was reported to have replied that I, on the contrary, had. There was not even any " smoke " or fire in this report, as, during all the time I was Chief of Staff the Empress never entered the room while I was reporting to the Tsar, not counting the conversations at table. I had only one interview, only one personal talk with the Empress. This was on the day of the dinner which the Emperor gave in Tsarskoe Selo to the members of the Inter-Ally Delegation. Outside of the banal topics of conversation, I had to go at some length of detail in placing before her the following thesis as to definite requests made to the Empress. In the majority of cases those requests would be such that the fulfilment of them by the Empress might be against the law or, what is worse, might be harmful to the interests of other persons, or, as often happens, to a whole group of people. In this way the granting of such favours, while satisfying one

person, either makes a precedent for violating existing laws or violates the interests of a large number of outside people. The person whose request has been fulfilled sometimes feels himself well treated; sometimes he regards the benefit received as only an act of justice; or quickly forgets it, seldom speaks about it, even sometimes hiding the fact of the gift, and by whom it was given. On the contrary a person whose interests have been set aside in favour of someone else will remember this a long time, and maybe keep it in mind until he dies.

Further, these people do not hesitate to disclose the name of the person by whom these interests were set aside. I remember that I even said that such persons would be more inclined to order their children and grandchildren not to forget the person who did them this or that injustice. In this way at the price of one benefited person is formed a complete group of dissatisfied people. Of course it is always more agreeable to fulfil a request than to deny it, but one must never lose sight of the consequences, however slight the irregularity may be. On the present occasion I was able to convince the Empress and make her see that while on the one side she might benefit someone, on the other a request should not be granted if against the law.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE INTER-ALLY CONFERENCE

THE Inter-Ally Conference, after being put off several times, was at last fixed for the end of January 1917. By the calling of this Conference in Petrograd, a new attempt was made to determine the common interests and the unity of military command on all the Allied fronts. But remembering past events, one must, in justice to the Russian High Command, recall that it, not only in words, but also by deeds, at the needs of the minute, realised this ideal.

When France asked the Grand Duke Nicolai to put a pressure on Germany and so help the French troops to stop the German advance, he not only sanctioned the farther advance of Rennenkampf's Army Corps into East Prussia in August 1914, but, besides, ordered the hurrying of Samsonoff's Army's advance, though acknowledging to what extent our troops were short of the necessary supplies for a continuous advance.

The same idea inspired the Russian Commander-in-Chief, when the Emperor in May 1916 gave Brussiloff the instructions to commence an invasion of Austria, so as to give help and to draw the Austrian troops off the Italians. This invasion destroyed our chance of delivering the main blow on the western front, where our object was to drive the Germans out of Russian territory. These operations were realised, notwithstanding that during the whole of the summer of 1915, when the Russian troops were feeling the

shortage of every kind of material supply, the Allies could not assist them in any way by an advance on their front.

The reason why active operations on our Allies' front were delayed was that the French Army was not yet supplied with heavy artillery, and the English Army had not completed its formation and organisation. The forces of the English regular army had already dwindled away. This army gave all it could give in proportion to its numbers and its strength at the beginning of the campaign. Finally, when the Germans were making their violent assaults to break down the obstinacy of the Verdun defenders in March 1916, the Russian Army was to undertake active operations, although its chiefs fully acknowledged how slight were the chances of any successes being gained.

Whether these operations of March 1916 gave any kind of help to France, we shall only know in the future if the Germans write a true history of the war, but, in any case, we did all that was incumbent upon us. Therefore the intention expressed by our Allies to make the principle of unity in the command a stronger one could only be accepted by us with satisfaction.

There were reasons to believe that the summer campaign of 1917 would determine this unity both in theory and practice.

The members of the Conference were to arrive at Port Romanovsky, on the Murman, and go thence on the lately completed railway which connected the capital with the unfrozen part of the White Sea, by special train to Petrograd. General Count Nostitz was sent to the Murman coast to meet them; he was our late military attaché in Paris. This was the first time that the Inter-Ally Conference had gathered in Petrograd. The journey to Russia of the mem-

bers of the Conference was kept secret on account of the danger of an attack by German submarines.

Still fresh in memory was the disaster that befell the founder of the English Army, Lord Kitchener, when he was on his way on a war ship. Every measure was used to prevent our enemies having the pleasure of sinking the ship conveying all the members of the Inter-Ally Conference. Judging by the report I received at Headquarters of the Conference in Chantilly, one was impressed with the belief that our Allies, either in the person of their Governments or in the person of the Higher Command, had a very vague idea of the conditions under which the advance operations on the Russian front were carried out. And evidently each of them applied their standpoint to us. Insufficiently did they understand the differences in the conditions under which we and our Allies stood; insufficiently did they calculate the vast extent of our operations, and besides that what a difference there was between such operations and the means we had to undertake them, and towards which the Allies had done practically little or nothing for us, if not in absolute, at any rate in relative proportion.

After the start of the war for a long time our Allies only let us have what surplus they had over their own requirements, but they expected from us what was almost superior to their own strength, whereas the Conference in Chantilly had determined the principle of a united front, unity in interests and unity in means in working them out and using them. The last conditions I understood more as being platonic, a wish rather than a law of existence. Nevertheless we should have taken advantage of these principles so as to show the Allies to what extent this law had not been applied, and to what degree it would remain a dead-letter in the future. All the same I hoped that on the basis of

this principle we might receive from our Allies the largest possible amount of war materials of the very best quality.

For a better view of the comparison of forces and means on the various fronts with those of our enemies I ordered General Loukomsky, under my directions, to prepare plans and diagrams to show these comparisons. The lengths of the various fronts with absolute and relative strengths held by the Allies, and those of the enemy facing them: the quantities of material means, heavy and light guns, machine guns, in the same way in absolute and relative figures, and the comparison with the Austro-German. These diagrams were made up of figures given to the members of the Conference at Chantilly, and unfolded a comprehensive idea of the extent of our Allies' fronts in all its bearings, and in what measure they were superior in strength of materials to the enemy fronts which were opposed to them; to what extent our Allies' fronts were better provided than ours; and also to what extent the Russian front in all respects was weaker than the Austro-German, excluding the number of battalions. We may add to this that our Allies and enemies could take advantage of all their artillery to their fullest capacity, whilst we, on the contrary, were still tied down because shells and cartridges did not flow in freely.

While I was at Headquarters, before my second journey to Petrograd, the head of the Roumanian Government, M. Bratiano, arrived. The position on the Roumanian front had at that time been strengthened, which was proved because at this point the Austro-Germans had not been able to move forward. But the organisation at the rear of both armies was far from being accomplished: the difficulties brought about by the evacuation of half of the Roumanian Government from Bukarest at first to Burlat, and then to Jassi, had not been overcome. In any case it ought to

have been foreseen, and a decision made, as to where, in case the necessity arose, the Roumanian Government and the administrative institutions were to be transferred, where the Roumanian High Command and the Royal Family were to be placed and have their headquarters. The Emperor took upon himself the trouble of finding a place for the latter, wishing to give them a house either in the Winter Palace in Petrograd, or in Livadia on the southern shores of the Crimea. Understanding what a trying period the Roumanian people and especially their rulers who took upon themselves the moral responsibility were living through, on account of their participation in the world war, I wished to give the head of the Government every possible help, within bounds of possibility, and in this way to lighten the heavy burden which the people, army, and ruling circles were bearing. The most difficult problem was the provision of housing for the contingents of which the Roumanian Army was to be formed, to fit them out and to feed them; their training was given over to French officers with General Berthelot at their head and the evacuation of all that had accumulated on Roumanian territory in Roumanian towns and on the Roumanian railways.

Judging by what he said, Bratiano was satisfied with our talks, a continuation of which we deferred till we met in Petrograd. From our conversation, I saw he was worried as to whether he would have the chance to take part in the Inter-Ally Conference in Petrograd and the opportunity of personally explaining the position of his country and the steps possible to protect its interests. I personally being against all routine in every business, and never fearing precedents, because a precedent never serves as a weighty argument in my mind, was inclined to insist on Bratiano being admitted to all the meetings of the Conference which

might involve Roumania. I reckoned that the Allies in this way would raise Bratiano's prestige in his country — this was what he especially insisted on. It was in the Allies' interest that Bratiano should remain the head of the Roumanian Government. One must remember that after Roumania had been defeated, the Germanophile Party raised its head and grew stronger. It was no secret that the idea of this party was to transfer Roumania to the side of our adversaries. What this party could do is shown in General Stroudza's case, which I have mentioned later on. Bratiano, maybe, was the only statesman in Roumania who finally burnt his boats. His political path was finally marked out, and there was no turning back. Others might say that Roumania had made a mistake and might try to persuade the Roumanian people to change their political views in a radical fashion, but they would not expect the man who himself had put Roumania on that present path to say that. Current events showed the justice of this supposition. When, in February 1918, Roumania by force of circumstances was obliged to have pour-parlers with her enemies, Bratiano had to leave the political arena.

On my arrival in Petrograd we had a private meeting under the presidency of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Pokrovsky. Here were marked into what departments the Conference would be divided, who would preside at the various sub-meetings or commissions, and so on. It was clear that those members of the Conference who came from abroad would be in a hurry to get back again. Part of them would be anxious to visit the fronts. Consequently the business of the Conference must be done at the highest possible pressure. Taking all these things into consideration, arrangements were based on them. The first meeting of the Conference, that is, its opening, with all the

members, was to take place at the so-called Round Hall of the Mary Palace, the room where private meetings of the Imperial Council took place. This meeting was confined to Pokrovsky's reception speech and my speech, which dealt chiefly with the programme in front of us. After this the members of the Conference were distributed into various commissions, each one to his own speciality. The commission the widest in scope demanding the most continuous work was the Munitions Committee. It, in its turn, was divided into many sub-committees, each one to its own branch of munitions. Its task was to determine the actual material needs of the Russian Army; the time when delivery could be promised by our Allies as a whole, and by which of them partially; and what our means were for delivering the goods from the ports to our fronts. The Minister of War, General Belaieff, presided at this Commission, and the Grand Duke Serge was there as the representative of Headquarters. I, personally, only called a final meeting of this Conference and with it the so-called Strategic Commission, so that I might hear their decisions, perhaps add some corrections, and touch upon questions of principle connected with supply and delivery of goods from the Russian ports, etc. A special Commission was created under the presidency of the Russian Ministry of Finance, N. N. Bark. Truly speaking, all the preparatory work of this Commission was discussed by Minister Bark with one of the English members of the Conference, Lord Revelstoke, who had specially come to discuss financial questions. It was only at the end of the Conference that this Commission met and invited to the meeting all the senior representatives of the interested Governments.

Under my presidency a Commission was to work, the members of which besides myself were three senior military

Ally representatives, viz. Generals Castelnau, Sir Henry Wilson, and Count Rudgieri. Finally, the Chief Commission called to discuss political questions was presided over by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pokrovsky; its members were: the representatives of Allied Governments, Lord Milner and Lord Revelstoke from England, Gaston Doumergue from France, Shaloya from Italy. The Ambassadors of the interested Governments were also members: Sir G. Buchanan, Paleologue, Marquis Carlotti, and Sazonoff, our late Minister for Foreign Affairs who had not yet left for London to take up his duties as Ambassador. From the Russian Government, besides the President and myself, were present the assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Neratoff, and the Minister of Finance, Bark. When the work of the Strategic Commission was ended, the foreign members were invited to attend one of the Chief Commission's meetings, where I, in general terms, omitting the secret part, laid before them those decisions and deductions which the Commission under my presidency had come to. The Strategic Commission finished its work first in three meetings, and Generals Castelnau and Wilson left to visit the fronts.

The opinions of the members of the above Commission did not differ in anything essential. Here the principle of unity in action of the Allies was confirmed again, under the greatest equity possible, at any rate so far as concerned the supply of a sufficiency of means to those armies whose country's industries were not sufficiently developed to satisfy their needs.

The political Commission had more meetings.

I could not attend one of these meetings, as I had to go to Headquarters for some time, not wishing to leave for too long the work of my Staff. The matters to be discussed

1 2 3 4 5 6

1. Colonel Marsengo, Italy
2. General Count Rikkel, Belgium
3. General Sir John Hanbury Williams, England
4. His Majesty
5. General Vicomte Laguich, France
6. Colonel Spolaikovitch, Serbia

HEADS OF THE ALLIED MILITARY MISSIONS

were opened up by Minister Pokrovsky; they not only touched on the business of the Governments, whose representatives were at the Conference, but some questions that affected other Allied as well as neutral countries. To one of these meetings Bratiano was invited. This was the meeting where the military Allied representatives were present. For Bratiano's presence at all these meetings I could not get the consent of the senior Allied Government representatives. Their arguments were that this would be a precedent to the representatives of all the small countries that were taking part in the war, Belgium, Portugal, Serbia, to be invited to the next Conference, and to this the Allied representatives had not the consent of their Governments.

I must say that the main hindrance to successful work in such Inter-Ally Commissions is that, not only when a decision has to be made, but also even when some kind of serious question is to be discussed, those taking part in the Commission announce that they have not got the authority for it. The effect is that such debates revert merely to exchanges of opinions.

Already the Minister Pokrovsky had realised that it would be necessary to found in Paris a permanent Inter-Ally Conference or meeting for the discussion and decision of affairs involving several of the Allies. But for the reason I have stated, *i.e.* lack of authority, no decision on this was come to. The representative of the Russian Government in making this proposal acknowledged that Russia's position at such a Conference would be less valuable, because our Allies would be able to include the heads of their respective Governments in such a meeting, persons able to both discuss and decide. Russia, on the other hand, even if she sent a special representative holding special powers, would either have to give him the right, although insuffi-

ciently informed, to decide the most serious matters, or to hold back a definite adhesion and ask for instructions from Petrograd. There are no questions without negative sides. The positive sides of a permanent Inter-Allied Conference were, nevertheless, superior to the negative.

During these days, on his journey from Roumania to England, an English colonel and a member of Parliament, Sir John Norton Griffiths, called on me. He had been to Roumania on a special mission to see that the destruction of all oil-works in Roumania was complete. The majority were working on English capital and were managed by English engineers. The proposal for the destruction of the oil-wells was met in Roumania with a good deal of hostility. The Roumanian Government, under the influence of public opinion, could not decide to give the necessary orders. Arriving on the ground and having grasped the position, Norton Griffiths turned for help to those Russian troops, and especially to the Russian cavalry, which having got in advance of the infantry were already in touch with the enemy. With the combined efforts of the local English engineers and the help from the Russian troops, Norton Griffiths successfully fulfilled the object for which he had been sent. Before war operations commenced with Roumania, Germany on a daily average received from Roumania more than 200 tanks of naphtha products. Much time should pass, counted in months, before Germany would again be able to receive such quantities of oil and lubricants.

Notwithstanding that it was war-time, and notwithstanding the fact that the majority of the Commission members, especially the Russian members, were greatly overburdened with work — the Commission to them was over and above their usual tasks — notwithstanding all this, the meetings

were interspersed by official dinners at the Ministries and at the Embassies. I must say that this bad example was not initiated by us; we only maintained the custom that was fixed at the Inter-Ally Conferences held before in other countries. I must acknowledge, however, that these dinners have a good side. They give the guests between the courses an opportunity to exchange ideas, to get better acquainted, and to talk over things which would not be always suitable in the meetings.

To the dinners in the Embassies were only invited those members of the Conference and those accompanying them who came from the countries these Ambassadors represented and the Russian members of the Conference. To the dinner at the English Embassy Rodzianko was also invited. Evidently at the receptions given by the Russian governing people all the representatives of all the Governments were collected, a much greater number of people. The entertainment given by Prince Golitzin as head of the Russian Government was the most crowded. All the visitors, as well as a great many Russian public people, members of the Imperial Council and Duma, were invited to this entertainment. I was not there, as at the moment I was in Mohileff.

Towards the end of the Conference all members were received by the Emperor, who invited them all to dinner. One good thing was that at this dinner there were no speeches. The members of the Commissions had already had enough gatherings for exchange of opinions and speeches. Further it seemed as if everything must by now have been debated, so that such dinner speeches would have involved either repetitions of old matters or general talk which was quite unnecessary. The exception to this was the dinner at Tsarskoe Selo, where the Emperor in a short

speech thanked the members of the Commission, and expressed his certainty that what they had accomplished would be to the advantage of the Allies and would ease their efforts to gain their general ends and intentions. It had been decided that none of the foreign representatives were to reply. Possibly to make it possible for the seniors of the foreign representatives to sit closer to the Emperor and have personal conversation with him, the Empress and the ladies of her suite were not present. As a rule, after dinner all the guests congregated in one of the drawing-rooms and formed what the French call a *cercle*. During this time the Chief Marshal of the Court, Count Benckendorff, invited each senior civilian and military representative in turn and conducted them into the presence of the Empress Alexandria.

Immediately after retiring to the drawing-room I approached the Emperor and asked that my report might be put off for two days, as those days had been called for the Inter-Ally Conference. My conversation with the Emperor turned to other subjects and was prolonged. However, in about a quarter of an hour the Emperor said, "I mustn't forget that I am host here and must be amiable," and then went round the foreign visitors, speaking to each one and to some for a fairly long time. He gave orders to tell him when the Empress's reception was over, but when it was finished he continued going the round of his visitors until he had spoken a pleasant word to each of them. At this time Count Frederiks and I went aside and had that conversation about the Empress Alexandra of which I wrote in one of the preceding chapters. This day the *cercle* was considerably longer than usual. Next day, from early morning on, the work of the Conference went through its usual routine. I took advantage of those days on which

the Commission and Sub-Commissions did not meet, for separate consultations with the seniors of the foreign delegates, explaining and discussing those matters which had not been in the category of questions discussed at the general or private meetings, *i.e.* relating only to Russia and to one of our Allies. At the end of the meeting, a financial consultation gathered, presided over by the Minister Bark. Bark had agreed with Lord Revelstoke on the majority of things. There only remained some questions of principle to be dealt with. I personally thought it well to draw attention to the fact that the Russian exchange during the war was going lower and lower, and that if steps were not taken to stop or hold this process as much as possible, we might be brought face to face with a position in which the Russian exchange would be so much lower than our Allies' exchange, but would be in an unaltered position in regard to the German exchange, and that our future trade connections would be easier with our enemies than with our Allies. From such trade connections the lion's share of profits would be taken by our present enemies. To reckon on extraordinary patriotism when the price to be paid is very high, is not advisable; one must base one's calculations on real fact and real profits. Further, a quick enrichment of Germany at Russia's expense would mean a new enormous backing to the German militarism, a new threat to the European peace. The senior representatives of England and France agreed with me in principle, but because of want of authority this question was not discussed in detail. This remained in the realms of good wishes.

The day for the departure of the Conference members was already drawing near — this date had as far as possible to be kept secret, and for this reason it was officially announced that the members were off to visit the fronts.

I had the satisfaction before their departure of handing the senior military members, in the Emperor's name, ribbons for Russian Orders, to Generals Castelnau, Wilson, and Count Rudgieri. I had to do this at the very last minute, as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in making up the lists of foreign visitors had prepared for all, without exception, "Orders without swords." But I thought that to generals such as Castelnau and Wilson Orders were handed not merely for their work in the Conference, but also for their past military activities and fighting services, which were of the best and foremost rank. Therefore I had to send my adjutant to the Orders Department to change those brought for "Orders with swords," whilst the parchments signed by the Emperor I sent to Tsarskoe Selo to be changed. Of course I had spoken to the Emperor first and received his sanction. The Emperor at his farewell audience had personally decorated General Castelnau with the Order of St. George.

After the members of the Conference had departed I had time to decide several points of foreign policy and subjects in connection with supplies for our armies. In the first were concluded the Polish and Czech problems. In the second the degree of co-operation between the Ministries of Agriculture, Ways and Communications, and Industries. Concerning the Polish question I had to speak with the Minister Pokrovsky and he also had to deal with the Czech question. For the decision of the Polish question a consultation had taken place before the Inter-Ally Conference was closed; in this consultation eleven members took part, the majority of whom were interested Ministers, the late Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonoff, who in his time had offered a scheme for the autonomy of Poland, the president of the Imperial Council, Tsheglovitoff, the late

Minister of Justice, and the President of the Duma, Rodzianko, and also the late Premier, Goremykin. This was the last of his Government work. In October 1917, while living in a villa on the Caucasian sea coast, he was murdered by anarchists.

The Czech question was no less intricate. The Czech nation, one of the foremost and most warlike, in a political sense, of the Slavonic nations, naturally counted upon the war closing with a Peace Conference which would give them a chance to get their full independence, to which they thought they had sufficient right. The representatives of the Czech people, both those living in the western countries and those who came to Russia, strove their utmost to get a preliminary basis to found with time their own independent Kingdom. This initial step was to include the formation of the nucleus of a future Czech army. For this the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs demanded the affirmation of the rule that Czechs enrolling in Czech regiments should take the oath to Russia, whereas they would be called on to fight only in the name of the future Czech Government. No less trouble was found in other departments which had used the Czech prisoners of war for labour in the interior. Another difficulty was that the Czech leaders counted themselves as Republicans, and this was objected to by many Russian statesmen who feared that such a step in favour of the Czechs would bear fruit in the other Slavonic nationalities. Further, the majority of the Czech leaders understood that the nation under a Republican form of government might be the arena of other Powers' disputes. The price paid for it might be slightly larger than the freedom gained in internal matters. The new Republic without doubt would lose its full freedom in international politics, and this alone would be the source of serious interior and external com-

plications for the young nation. In any case one would suppose at that time that the building of the Czech State would be decided at the International Conference without consideration of this or that kind of Czech political party. I must say that in the Russian Army were already included several Czech battalions, but later, under some intricate political influence, they were broken up into separate companies and distributed among the various armies and army corps.

It was very evident that such half-decisions could not satisfy the Czech politicians. This raised passions and gave hopes, but the question was not settled. The inspiring spirit in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of this Czech question was a Czech, Durich. However, there were great suspicions that he had been tampered with by Austrian agents and cleverly used, not so much as a provocateur, but as a man to entangle this Czech question, and to compromise it. I personally did not meet him, and therefore can give no personal impression of him; but from what other Czechs said, who were trusted both by their own people and by our Allies, I could only come to one conclusion, and that was that Durich's abilities would not assist a settlement. On the other side it was as though our Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded from the Czechs Russian patriotism. My point of view was that first of all one is a son of one's own fatherland, and after that a sympathiser and helper to friendly nations. A bad Czech patriot would be a useless friend for Russia. In any case I had full hope that the question of new Czech military organisations would have a solution favourable for the Czechs and profitable for us.

To put the question of supply in order, I invited three Ministers to come to the Hôtel d'Europe — where I resided — to be under the same roof as the Conference mem-

bers, those most nearly connected with supplies for the Russian Armies, viz. Minister of Agriculture Rittich, the Minister of Ways and Communications Voinovsky-Krigier, and the Minister of Trade and Industries, Prince Shahovskoy. The meeting, lasting three hours, yielded important results, much greater than the earlier methods of correspondence, which sometimes was continued for months. Here we decided the problem of obtaining coal from the mines; this had been going on for eighteen months. Prince Shahovskoy, who was just leaving for the Don Basin coal region, formally promised us to act on the lines agreed upon at this meeting. This meeting incidentally gave me the idea of creating a post, and appointing to it a proper person who would sometimes be in Petrograd and sometimes at Headquarters in close touch with the Chief of Staff and under the direct touch with the Generalissimo, the Emperor, that person being able to co-ordinate and direct the activities of the Ministries and Institutions for the Army supplies. It would be necessary to formulate rules and regulations, by which such a person would be guided, and by which he could be legally appointed and given the rights and powers. But the most important is to find a person capable of fulfilling such difficult duties. When General Alexeieff returned I spoke to him about it, and when making my last report, explained the idea to the Emperor, but it was difficult to say, notwithstanding the Emperor's sympathy, as also Alexeieff's, whether the scheme could be brought into being. In any case the Russian Revolution crushed this possibility, as it did others.

service to the Allies, because during the winter months fighting had died down on the Russian and Anglo-French fronts. The Austro-Germans always strove to use these months for increased movements. In the winter 1914–15, taking advantage of the mild weather in the Polish Kingdom districts, they attempted to take Warsaw. In the winter of 1915–16 the Austrians finished with unhappy Serbia, and the Germans tried to capture Verdun. In the winter of 1916–17, if the Germans had not been compelled to throw about thirty divisions into Roumanian territory, to finish her and to stop the advance we were making to help Roumania, they would undoubtedly have chosen some other sphere for their activity. Such operations might have been directed against the Salonika salient and General Sarrail's Army. By sending to Salonika forces considerably less than were required on the Roumanian front, and using much shorter lines of communication, when compared with those of the Allies, Germany's success, one must think, would have been certain. The result of this would have been the junction of the German and Greek armies. From such evidence, as the Press was allowed to publish, we know that the Emperor William was in communication with his sister the Queen of Greece, and evidently promised her speedy help in the winter of 1916–17. This upheld King Constantine in his efforts to maintain the Greek neutrality.

When the Inter-Ally Conference was concluded, we were able to call the Polish Commission together more frequently. When the President, Prince Golitzin, opened it, he explained to those present why the Emperor had delegated this duty to him. However, he did not actually explain what were the Emperor's intentions and proposals. But, knowing that the Commission was the result of my reports to the Emperor, he turned to me and asked me to make it clear to the

members of the Commission what the Emperor meant in his Order of December 25th, 1916, in speaking of the future unity of Poland, called it " Free Poland."

There was nothing else for me to do then, but, as fully as possible, to place before the Commission the contents of my reports to the Emperor and all those arguments which made me feel that for the good of both Slavonic nations, Russian and Polish, any forcible union of these two people in one Empire should be put aside, and that Poland should have as independent a life as Russia had. I have already pointed out that among the members of the Commission were the Presidents of both our Legislatures.

The exchange of opinions was started with M. V. Rodzianko giving notice that in taking part in the Commission he did so as a private individual and not in his official capacity of President of the Duma. Developing this idea he explained that he spoke for himself personally. The same point was expressed by the President of the Imperial Council, Tsheglovitoff.

When I placed my view on the Polish question before the Commission, I reckoned that Sazonoff would take part in the discussion, and as the author of the scheme for the Polish autonomy as a component part of the Russian Empire, would place before us his scheme, and the motives which prompted him to such a solution of the Polish problem. Actually the further debates were for considering the justice or injustice of the arguments that I put before them. Sazonoff, who had only recently been appointed Ambassador to Great Britain on the death of Count Benckendorff, a position he never actually took up, and persons inclined to agree with his opinion, explained how they understood the future building-up of Poland and her rôle as a component part of the Russian Empire. Several understood this au-

tonomy as a condition giving Poland the right to have her own troops; others pictured to themselves a future Dual Kingdom, somewhat like that of Austria-Hungary. What specially frightened the majority of these people was that Free Poland would fall under Germany's influence, and thus react to the detriment of Russian interest.

After three meetings Prince Golitzin took the votes of the members — those who were of my opinion, those who were against. The majority was one against me. Amongst my opponents was General Belaieff, who admitted he had voted against me because of his own views of strategy. Later, in a private conversation, he agreed with my opinion, but in the Commission he never again discussed the matter, so that I was not clear as to which opinion he favoured. The Minister of the Interior, Protopopoff, should have been a member of the Commission. Just before the meeting I saw him in Prince Golitzin's cabinet, where the table was ready for the meeting, but when M. V. Rodzianko entered the room Protopopoff turned round sharply and left the room by another door. At the first meeting his place was unoccupied and on the following days he sent one of his Assistant Ministers instead. To my astonishment, when the votes were being counted, this Assistant Minister, declared that Protopopoff, whom he represented, agreed with my view. At the following meeting, the date for which was not fixed, however, several of the foremost Polish politicians were to be invited so that they might express the ambitions and plans of the Poles, even if only they were the opinions of those whom they represented. This meeting took place about March 2nd. As is now known, two weeks later there occurred the Revolution which radically changed the hopes and the possible future of Poland.

All the business for which I had come to Petrograd was

ended; there remained the journey with my last report to the Emperor and the return to Headquarters. Just then I received a telegram from General Alexeieff from Sevastopol saying that he was much improved in health, and that he expected to arrive in Mohileff some days earlier than the termination of his leave. It was necessary that I should be at Headquarters before Alexeieff, so that I could hand everything over to him, and acquaint him of all that had taken place during his absence and also tell him what had been commenced or notified but was not yet completed.

On February 26th, the Imperial Duma was to be opened after two months' cessation of work. In Duma circles up to the last minute hope had not been lost that on the day of the opening there would be a change in the composition of the Ministerial Council, and they specially waited and hoped for the resignation of Protopopoff. The time grew nearer, and the awaited Imperial decree did not appear. At the beginning of February, before the Session was opened, Rodzianko attempted to obtain an audience with the Emperor, but received no reply. Several days prior to the opening of the Session he again petitioned for the same thing, but for two days did not receive any reply, and therefore feared he would be unable to have an audience of the Emperor and that he would not have the opportunity of communicating his fears as to the conditions under which the work of the Duma would be conducted. At dinner at the English embassy, Rodzianko explained to me his apprehensions on the matter. I promised that when making my report to the Emperor next day I would clear it up. On the following day, after I had reported, Rodzianko received an invitation to come to the palace. But Rodzianko was not satisfied with his conversation with the Emperor, as he was unable to satisfy himself that the Emperor was

inclined to meet the wishes of the Duma. On February 24th, in the evening, knowing that next day I had again to report to the Emperor, Rodzianko came to me at my hotel and our conversation continued until two o'clock in the morning. When saying "good night" I promised him to speak again to the Emperor and to ask him to fulfil the wishes of what was called the "Bloc."

The meeting of the leaders of the party and the more important and influential members of the Imperial Duma and the Imperial Council was called the "Bloc." Their actual wishes at that time were very modest. They asked that the Emperor would issue a decree before the opening of the Session, empowering Alexander Trepoff to form a Cabinet of Ministers of his, Trepoff's, own choice, and further, that this Cabinet should be responsible, not to the Duma, but to the Emperor. There was still sufficient time. At the beginning of the Session this decree would have been known, and the Duma would have commenced its sittings under entirely different conditions. That I was not a stranger in Duma circles the Emperor knew quite well. He knew this by what outside people told him, and also from myself personally for the following reason.

Count Frederiks, first through a third person, and then individually, warned me that there were people who, while talking with the Emperor, coupled my name with that of A. J. Goutchkoff. I must say that there had been a time in the years following the Revolution of 1905 when the Emperor delegated authority to Goutchkoff and even commanded his presence and consulted with him on various questions of internal politics, but from 1910 there were some people who assured the Emperor that Goutchkoff was the most dangerous member of the Duma and possibly an enemy to the Monarchy and Dynasty. I told Count Fred-

eriks then that I should have a conversation with the Emperor on the point. I decided on this, only because I thought it harmful to national affairs to have a change of Chief of Staff just then, and also because I wished at any rate to keep the business in my hands until such time as Alexeieff had quite recovered and was able to return to his duties, which was not far off.

The people who connected my name with Goutchkoff's had a sufficient reason for doing so, and the reason was this: At the opening Session of the Third Duma in 1907 and at the commencement of its legislative work, there was formed what was called a Commission of State Defence made up of members of the Centre and Right wing of the Duma. The majority of these people, as far as military defence was concerned, had very vague ideas. The elected President was A. J. Goutchkoff, and what may be termed his *alter ego*, A. J. Zviagintseff, was also made a member. Zviagintseff was a former officer on the General Staff. Goutchkoff, by his intermediary, made me an offer; I was to gather a circle of military men around me, people of my own choosing, so as to help the Commission to look through and discuss all the legislative schemes forwarded to the Commission. For discussing the schemes the more influential members of the Defence Commission were to be included in my circle of experts. Further, Goutchkoff asked us to discuss all those radical reforms which it was absolutely necessary to introduce into the War Ministry and the Army, so that they might recover the strength which had been shattered at the time of the Manchurian War. Zviagintseff warned me that in case I refused his offer he would have no option but to turn for help to those people whom it was accustomed to term as belonging *au salon des refuses*. In view of this I did not think I had the right to reject the offer, but warned

them that I could only accept it if I reported to and obtained the consent of the Minister of War, at that time General Rediger, and to the Chief of the General Staff, then General Palitzin, whose duties were not subject to the Minister for War, while I was immediately under his jurisdiction.

I did this, not so much for my own sake, as to avoid receiving a refusal from those persons whom I intended to include in my Circle to help the Imperial Duma. In time I obtained the consent of the Minister of War and General Palitzin, the same who took General Gilinsky's post as representative of the Russian Army at the French Headquarters in 1916. The Circle's work continued during the time that Goutchkoff was President of the Commission more than two years. To form this Circle I did my best to select people whom I knew intimately, not so much for my knowledge of them as for their breadth of view on military matters. It is sufficient to say that amongst these was General Alexeieff, later Chief of Staff at Headquarters. Of the ten to twelve men that took part in the Circle's work, the majority of them occupied important military posts during the war. I will not name them, as I do not think it would interest those who may read these lines.

As time went on the Circle's work became known, reports were circulated concerning it, and some people christened us " Young Turks." But if the War Ministry and the Russian Government had carried out those principles which were the " Corner Stone " of the work of this Circle, and even if the measures had been accepted, then perhaps Russia would not now have been in the sorrowful condition in which she is. The basic idea was the creation of a full independence for Russia in the working out of all that was necessary for the carrying-on of the European War. But

for this, enormous expenditure would be demanded, and the Russian financial policy at that time had as its chief aim the filling-up of the cellars with gold and the decreasing of the expenditure in connection with defence as much as possible. When I told the Emperor all about this, he, whilst I was placing before him my ideas on the desirability of Russia having full independence in war industries, interrupted me with the words "Yes, that is exactly what I have always suggested." To this I had to reply that I was sorry to say his ministers had not only disregarded his suggestion, but had no intention of carrying it out.

Having placed all this before the Emperor, I added, as to my present relations with Goutchkoff, that I had occasion to meet him at the front in 1915 in his capacity as Chief of the Red Cross.

But at this visit to Petrograd evidently Goutchkoff himself, understanding that his name was being connected with a clear opposition to the Government, had not thought it necessary to invite me to his house, nor had he even visited me. During all the time I had been here I had seen him but once, and then on neutral ground, in a private house. Although I did not mention to the Emperor the names of those who were in the Circle with me, still it seemed to me as if the Emperor had had his thoughts and suspicions of me dispelled. At the commencement of our conversation the Emperor confirmed the fact that people had actually spoken to him about me connecting my name with Goutchkoff. On February 25th, having finished my report, I touched upon the question of the united work of Protopopoff and the Duma. I did my best to persuade the Emperor that an entire change of Ministry was at times unavoidable, if its labours were not in line with his views. But in case the ministers are chosen quite at haphazard the decisions of

Imperial questions are subject to the accidental presence at meetings of the Ministerial Council of this or that Minister or his assistants or to the absence of others. Under such conditions the Imperial ship could not keep on the one course, but would be like a ship without a rudder, left to the mercy of wind and waves. And if I referred to Trepoff's name and not to another, it was only because the Emperor was evidently satisfied with Trepoff, and in him we had a person with the greatest influence amongst all the members of the Duma and Council. The Emperor listened to me attentively to the end, and at different aspects agreed with me, but actually gave me no reply.

Succeeding days showed that the influence of Protopopoff and others had been the stronger. The Duma Session commenced, but the Government made no programme speech. Protopopoff did not go to the meetings. The Duma atmosphere became still more threatening. To clear this atmosphere the Government sent the Minister of Agriculture, Rittich, to the Duma. He drew up a plan of the united work of the Government organisations and the public institutions, work which was in full progress and from all points of view gave hope of satisfying the food demands of the Army, the capitals, the workpeople, those engaged on defence work. Generally Rittich was met by the Duma with a favourable feeling. All the same this did not dissolve the conflict between the Duma and the Government. Whilst in Petrograd in my spare time I strove to become acquainted with the current of thought amongst the public, and partly also with the ideas of the leaders of the Duma and Council. It was partly for this purpose that my elder brother, a member of the Imperial Council and also of the Inter-Parliamentary "Bloc," invited the foremost people of the "Bloc" and Defence Commission to dinner. My

brother was also a member of the Defence Commission, which was presided over by the War Minister. It was the same Defence Commission whose activities seemed to be too much encouraged in 1915 by its then President, the Minister of War, General Polivanoff. On this account he was represented to the Emperor in a bad light, which resulted in his resigning his Ministerial duties not long after. I must say that the harmful work Polivanoff accomplished as president of a military commission that elaborated the so-called " rights of the military men " after the Revolution showed that the Emperor was right. Amongst those invited to dinner was Goutchkoff, the President of the War Industrial Committee, and Shingareff, at one time Minister of Agriculture to the Temporary Government, later murdered by the Bolsheviks, after arrest, in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. There was also Maklakoff, the last Ambassador sent by the Temporary Government to France.

Members of the other parties were also invited, amongst them being Prince Lobanoff, known to London and Paris as a member of the Legislative Delegation which visited Allied countries' capitals in 1915. There was also the Duma member Shoulgin, the only one at the Moscow meeting in August 1917, among the speakers who had the courage to testify that he had been, and remained, a Monarchist.

There was no doubt that the public in the capital was both troubled and dissatisfied with the Government work in the interior. This in its turn had affected the proper supplying of the Army, and threatened that this supply would not fully satisfy the needs of the Army and the population. Especially threatening was the work of the railways, which was considerably complicated by the difficulties of upkeep and continuous breaking-down of the

rolling-stock. If this was not remedied it was feared that the railways would not be strong enough to fulfil the minimum demanded by the country and Army. Many foresaw a Revolution when the war finished if the Government continued as it was. But, of course, even at that time nobody had any idea that the Revolution would turn out as it actually did. The fear was that when demobilisation took place there would be riots in agricultural centres, and in towns, when the return of workmen would upset the equilibrium between the demand and supply of labour in the industrial centres. To those people with whom I held any discussion, possibly nothing was known of what was happening in the industrial centres, and what kind of propaganda was circulating in workmen's circles. Neither was I aware of what took place there, but it may be supposed that everything was not quiet, because it was at this time that, by orders from Protopopoff, the Petrograd police, as we learnt after the Revolution, were being trained in the use of machine guns. Clearly the Government could not reckon on the Petrograd garrison's loyalty, though this garrison had reached the unusual number of 160,000. In peace time the garrison in the capital never even reached 40,000. Evidently at Protopopoff's request, the Emperor once instructed me to send to Petrograd, for a rest, two cavalry divisions which were to include one Guards division from the Special Army. From inquiries I made of General Habaloff, the commandant of the district troops, I ascertained that there was no place in which a regiment could be quartered, much less a division. Then the Emperor confined himself to sending for a Naval Marine Guards detachment from the shores of the Black Sea and quartering them in the villages around Tsarskoe Selo.

I do not know on whose initiative, but by the Emperor's

personal instructions to the Minister of War was formulated a scheme for detaching Petrograd and its suburbs from the jurisdiction of the Commander-in-Chief of the northern front, General Russky, and bringing it under the jurisdiction of a new Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd District who was directly responsible to the Minister of War. There was nothing harmful in this from a military standpoint; on the contrary it even eased General Russky's responsibilities. Consequently from my side there could be no objection to this change, the more so as the interests of the northern front rear would be watched in agreement with General Russky's wishes.

CHAPTER XXV

THE REVOLUTION — ABDICATION OF THE EMPEROR

On the eve of my departure I journeyed down for the last time to report to the Emperor, and at this visit I found when he intended coming to Headquarters. I informed him of the telegram I had received from General Alexeieff that he expected to arrive in Mohileff about March 5th. The Emperor had not been informed as to how Alexeieff's illness had been progressing and he expressed astonishment and a doubt whether the General would be sufficiently recovered to undertake the strenuous labours which had broken down his health. I was able to allay the Emperor's fear, as some time before I had received detailed information of the state of General Alexeieff's health.

Learning from the Emperor that he proposed to arrive at Headquarters about March 7th, I told him that possibly he would still find me there, as I should require some days to hand over to General Alexeieff and go into matters with him. I think, however, that the Emperor was not certain of being able to leave Tsarskoe Selo on that day, as on saying good-bye he thanked me for the work we had done together. Leaving Petrograd it never entered my head that two weeks would not pass before the city would be the scene of events which would bear world-wide significance. On the day of my arrival, General Alexeieff returned to Mohileff. Very much tanned by the Southern sun, he did not give the impression of a man who had been within a

hair's breadth of death some months earlier. Although an official welcome had been cancelled, nevertheless the platform of the railway station was crowded with his colleagues and subordinates who had come to welcome him. In this one could see how he was loved and respected by all those surrounding him. I knew that whilst he was in the Crimea there were people who alleged that in several of my actions I indicated a desire to undermine his authority, and to get my temporary post confirmed. These people tried to create distrust and estrangement by asserting that I took his opinions into account insufficiently, and that I was doing everything from my own personal standpoint. As proof they brought forward the incident that when Alexeieff asked me to get the Emperor's sanction for an extension of leave for two weeks, so that he might complete the cure the doctors had ordered him, I had asked the Emperor for a whole month. Of course these people did not know that, simultaneously, I had written to Alexeieff that this would not prevent him, health permitting, returning to Headquarters earlier than the time extended, earlier even than the two weeks. I do not know whether all this made any impression on Alexeieff, but in any case it was sufficient for us to have a short conversation in order to eradicate any idea that he might have gained from such rumours.

In the course of two days I had laid everything before him and we left each other on as friendly terms as we had ever been. Immediately afterwards I telegraphed to the Emperor reporting that everything had been given over, and asking permission to leave for my regular post, as news had been received that the day for the Emperor's departure had not been fixed. On the same day I received the Emperor's sanction to return to the Special Army. Actually the Emperor arrived at Mohileff less than twenty-four hours

after my departure. At my last interview with the Emperor I asked permission for three weeks' leave, as for private reasons I wished to go to the Northern Caucasus. In giving me the permission the Emperor supposed that I would start straight away from Headquarters, but this was not my intention. I preferred to return to my army for two weeks, to see how all the instructions I had given at the beginning of November had been fulfilled, and to give new orders before starting on my leave. When I was called to Headquarters from Lutsk I was almost on the eve of leaving for the Caucasus. I journeyed through Kieff, and as my train stopped there I thought it my duty to drive to visit the Dowager Empress, because all this time I had been directly associated with her son. I was informed by telephone that Her Majesty would receive me at twelve o'clock noon. Maria Feodorovna continued to be at the head of the Red Cross organisation, interesting herself with the duties of every department, and personally directing the work. Naturally the conversation mainly touched on these affairs. The malicious matters of the day, problems which were troubling all Russia, and home politics, she barely referred to, and I, on my part, preferred not to mention them. Later I paid a visit to Prince Shervashidzy, one of her suite, with whom I went in to lunch with the Empress. There were covers for four. Evidently Prince Shervashidzy and Princess Koutouzoff, the *demoiselle d'honneur* of the Empress, were the usual companions Her Majesty had at dinner.

Next day I arrived in Lutsk and commenced my well-known duties on the same day. After a day or two I began my rounds of the army corps and positions, so that in the first days of March I could take my leave. Fate again intervened and altered my plans. Events brewing in Petro-

grad compelled me to abandon the thought of leaving, even for a short time.

The first news of what had taken place in Petrograd, the riots and bloodshedding in the streets, came to me in a telegram sent me by General Brussiloff. This message, however, was couched in such indefinite terms, although it mentioned the bloodshed, that Major-General Alexeieff, my Chief of Staff, when he brought the telegram straight from the wires, persuaded me to speak to General Suchomlin, the Chief of Staff at the front, by wire, asking him to communicate with General Brussiloff telling him not to publish this information amongst the people until the position was cleared up, as it would create trouble amongst the troops, but to wait until some definite news had been received. I agreed with Alexeieff that in such cases the worst thing was to give food for suspicion. In my communication with Suchomlin he asked if I should still retain that opinion if the news were very much more disquieting. I answered that in that case they should be informed, as, sooner or later, truth will come out. An hour later instructions came for the wire to be held back, as another would be received in its stead, giving definite information from the "Stafka."

This telegram was brought to me in the middle of the night; it was certainly quite definite. In it was stated that the Emperor had abdicated for himself and his son, and that the right to the throne had gone in favour of his brother Michael. However alarming the rumours were, in private conversations between the Army Staff and the Staff at the front, there was no reason to presume such a radical upheaval. I immediately gave orders that all the commanders of army corps were to be invited to come to me in the morning. By noon they had all arrived, and I instructed them in the manner they were to impart the news to the

men before they could learn it from private sources. We had to ensure that the news was given to the troops direct by their chiefs, who were to explain that abdication is the Will of the Monarch, and that we were bound by the oath we had taken to fulfil his will. But just before the commanders arrived, a telegram came, asking us to withhold the public announcement of the Tsar's abdication manifesto. Hopes were at once aroused that perhaps events had taken another direction. But the commanders were still sitting with me when telegraph ribbons in pieces were brought to me from which we learnt that events were certainly moving, but not exactly as we had hoped. The next wire informed us of the Grand Duke Michael's refusal to be his brother's successor, before the will of the People could be expressed at the Constitutional Assembly. The telegram spoke of the arrival in a short time of the Oath of Allegiance to the Russian State and the Temporary Government.

Having added my instructions, I let the commanders go, so that they might gather their subordinates together the same day and be ready to go to any regiment in which misunderstanding might arise. For the Oath itself we had to wait for the text.

Thanks to the precautionary measures and to the fact that all officers, from the highest to the lowest, took a lively part in explaining to their people what had taken place, the unexpected news and the Oath were received throughout the whole Army without any disturbances and called forth no excesses. The exceptions were one field and one Guards regiment, where it was more troublesome to explain matters to the soldiers. An agitator explained to them that they should not take the Oath under the shade of the Standard on which remained the initials of the abdicated Monarch, and speak the words of the Oath in which occurred the word

State, a word having connection with the word Monarch or Tsar. (In Russian the word State, "gosudarstvo," and Monarch, "gosudar," is of the same derivation.) This only shows to what extent, historically, in the conception of Russian people, the meaning of State and Monarchy is connected. From the most ancient times the Russian people had no thought of their country except as a State at the head of which stands the Monarch. But the men were told that, even now, Republican France retains the name of state ("Gosudarstvo").

Another case was exactly the opposite. In one of the Guards infantry regiments the men refused to take off Nicolai II's initials from their shoulder-straps. In each case I ordered that those who did not wish to take the Oath should be allowed to remain outside the Oath; let those who wished to retain the initials do so. The result was that the men, seeing there was nothing especially important, took the Oath. In the other case they gradually stopped using the initials. By this time the Grand Duke Michael's Manifesto had been received in which he gave his reason for refusing the throne. It was necessary to publish both manifestos to the troops and population. Publishing these for general information, I used printed bills which were put up at all frequented points. I commended my order to the troops "Fulfilling the Holy Will of God's Anointed Monarch," etc., etc., and in the order I invited them to take example from the Emperor, who had preferred to abdicate from the throne rather than permit, at a time when the Empire should gather all its strength for the fight with the external enemy, the arising of an internecine struggle, and the inevitable shedding of a brother's blood. Further I told them to take the Oath and serve their Fatherland as faithfully as they had served under the guidance of the

Oath they had taken to the Tsar who had just abdicated.

Up to now everything was going smoothly amongst the troops. No special disturbances took place when the famous order number one was received, the order that was written and published by the Petrograd Soviet of Workmen and Soldiers' Deputies. Later was received the explanation from the new Minister of War, A. J. Goutchkoff, wherein he stated that this order appertained only to the Petrograd garrison. But as time went on agitators were found amongst the troops who explained the injustice of such a partially distributed order to the soldiers — an order which not only affected the soldiers who had never smelt powder and lived quietly in the capital. The simultaneous publication, by both the Temporary Government and the Petrograd Soviets, of the gift to the whole of Russia of every possible freedom also produced its active effect. I had to reckon with an accomplished fact and strive to keep the initiative in my hands. Amongst the Lutsk garrison, composed mainly of rear organisations, meetings began to be called by people chosen for this purpose from amongst these organisations. Gradually these were added to by those chosen from the neighbouring fighting units. It remained for us to send soldiers and officers to take part so as to lead the meetings on a straight course, and, so far as possible, to endeavour to manœuvre some clever and modest people into the circle of those who would be authorised to prepare the rules by which such meetings would be directed. Personally I proposed to attend only when an emergency required it, although I had already had occasion to speak to the crowd from the steps of the town cathedral, where I had gone to attend a memorial service for those killed in the first days of the Revolution. The crowd consisted mostly of soldiers from non-combatant units. I already

found an organised meeting. One of the speakers mentioned my name, though, in a way flattering to me, and this compelled me to break in and address the crowd.

To the first meetings of those chosen by the Lutsk garrison I was fully able to give audience. A scheme for a statute for such meetings was placed before me, together with the rules for the election of members, and it was slightly altered by me. But I already found a point in it according to which this project only came into force if confirmed by me, and that no determination of a meeting of men belonging to the Army would have legal force other than by my confirmation. When this was accepted it was sent, signed by me, with " Confirmed " written on the margin. According to this statute two weeks later was gathered the first conference of Officer and Soldier Deputies. I, however, had already left Lutsk for Minsk to take up the command of the troops on the western front. The statute finally accepted at this meeting was confirmed by General Baloueff, who took my place. It was characteristic that when the chosen civilians from various public organisations came to the first meeting (they were working for the troops), they were informed that their presence at the meeting was not desirable, and they had to leave. One of the first acts of the Lutsk meeting — this was while I was yet there — was to choose Deputies who were to be sent to Petrograd to demand from the Soviet (Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies) that they were not to interfere in the domain of the policy of the Temporary Government, to which the Army had taken the Oath, and whom they trusted. Later, more cautious opinions triumphed and the delegates were authorised to ascertain whether the Soviets were actually interfering with the Government activity or whether this was only rumour. Besides this they were authorised to ask

the Soviets several questions — for instance, "Was it true that the Petrograd garrison up to now had not taken the Oath of Allegiance to the Temporary Government?" It is quite clear that immediately after the Revolution, and for some time afterwards, in the Army the authority of the Temporary Government was regarded as superior to the authority of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils. It was much later than this that the official Ambassadors from our Allies, in the persons of Albert Thomas, who had been in Russia before as a Minister of France during the time of the former Government, Arthur Henderson from England, M. Vandervelde from Belgium, and Senator Root from America, amongst other things announced that they had come mainly to welcome the Soviets. It was only after this that the authority of the Chosen Councils was gradually raised and, parallel with this, the authority of the Temporary Government fell. It must not be forgotten that from the very beginning of the Revolution there was a smothered struggle between these two institutions of which we heard only rumours. Later came rivalry and then open enmity, in other words a fight for power. And then the Soviets resorted to force, disorganised force, but one that they still held in their hands. The Temporary Government also resorted to force, a more real one, the Army, but this force could give them no assistance on the spot. Perhaps the main error of the Temporary Government consisted in that it did not change its place of residence and go where it would not have been under the pressure of the workmen and soldiers' mobs.

It was only considerably later that we received details of the way in which the Revolution had been carried out. I can describe briefly its main phases. The first disturbance arose in Petrograd, not so much in consequence of the an-

nouncement of the closing of the Duma, as to the circulation of rumours that famine threatened Petrograd on account of an insufficiency of flour in the warehouses. As a fact, owing to the snowdrifts in the South of Russia, several trainloads of flour were held up, and in Petrograd there was some kind of delay in the flour being given out to the bakeries. Later it was ascertained that in the town there was no special shortage in flour. However, in these cases it is not so important what actually is, or is not, as what people imagine. Working on these suppositions, agitators called the people out into the streets and organised demonstrations. The local authorities did not dare to crush the disturbances by force of arms. Nevertheless, part of the garrison was brought into the streets only to frighten the mobs, but not to use arms. This did not prevent the agitators — bribed by money, whence obtained is not exactly known to this day — from carrying out their nefarious work. Probably various forces having different ends in view, but without agreement, were working in the one direction. Only some future historian will discover those actually guilty of these first disturbances.

On March 11th a detachment of the Volynsky Guards Regiment was sent into the streets to quell the mobs. Without having used its arms, it returned in the evening to the barracks, where continuous meetings were being held. When entering the barracks it got a hostile reception, and in the ensuing fight the officer commanding the detachment was killed. This came to the ears of the secret leaders of the movement, and that night Kerensky and Tchheidze went to the Volynsky Barracks. Both members of the Imperial Duma in fiery speeches explained to the soldiers that there was no drawing back for them; by remaining faithful to the Tsarist regime they were answerable for the officer's death,

for which in war-time the penalty was death, but if they passed over to the Revolution they were guaranteed immunity for the murder. Next day the Volynsky Regiment, without officers, were the first to arrive at the Imperial Duma and put themselves under the orders of people desirous of upsetting the Government. In Mohileff on March 11th news had already been received of the disturbances commencing in Petrograd, and next day the Emperor left for Tsarskoe Selo, where his family and the Heir Apparent (Naslednik) were.

It is possible that this move was the greatest consequence of what followed. The Emperor's journey, instead of taking one night, was one of two days. For two days he was cut off from Russia and was prevented from having any communication with either the governing circles or with the Army. Evidently the railway servants were in close touch with the initiators of the Revolution and had received instructions not to permit the Imperial train to get to Petrograd. Attempts were made to get the train to Petrograd by way of several lines, but at all points it was stated that the line was not clear. After being stopped at Bologoi on the Nicolai Railway, the Imperial train arrived, on March 14th, at Pskoff, where General Russky's Staff was quartered. Getting through by direct lines to the President of the Duma, Rodzianko, General Russky informed him that the Emperor was issuing a Manifesto in which he was instituting a Ministry responsible to the legislative institutions. The answer received was that this act would have been sufficient one or two days earlier; that events had moved so far, that only the Emperor's abdication would tranquillise the country. Next day Goutchkoff, member of the Imperial Council, and Shoulgin, a member of the Duma, arrived in Pskoff from

the Duma to see the Emperor. I have mentioned these people in earlier chapters.

Knowing for what purpose they had come, the Emperor met them with a Manifesto of Abdication, ready prepared; in this, however, it did not state that the abdication included his son. The Emperor asked the delegates whether they could answer for the tranquillity of the country if he abdicated, and would undertake that affairs would go on better than they had done before. A. J. Goutchkoff gave the Emperor an affirmatory answer. During the conversation the Emperor became aware that to abdicate in favour of his son would deprive him of the company of his son, and he consequently altered his decision and went to his room. Returning he handed Goutchkoff the altered Manifesto with changed text, in which he abdicated in favour of his brother Michael. Such a turn was a surprise to Goutchkoff and Shoulgin, but they admitted that all that was left for them to do was to take the Manifesto, and return with it to the capital. During this time telegrams were being exchanged between General Russky and General Alexeieff and all the other Commanders-in-Chief. General Brussiloff, true to his opportunism, took it without objection as an accomplished fact, and it was as if he favoured it. General Evert declared, although feebly, against the abdication. General Saharoff commenced his telegram with expressions of loyalty, but finished by stating the abdication as a fact. The Grand Duke Nicolai acknowledged that this was the Will of the Almighty, and asked the Tsar to accept it as the working of Providence. General Russky being in Pskoff with the Emperor, as far as is known, encouraged him in his decision to abdicate. Later it was said that when all this was told to the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna she refused to be-

lieve such a thing could be possible. After having abdicated, in his talk with Goutchkoff and Shoulgin, the Emperor asked them if they could guarantee the safety of himself and his family, and whether they would guarantee him the right in the near future, and before the close of the war, to leave Russia for one of the neutral kingdoms. To both these questions the Emperor received an affirmative reply, later confirmed by the Temporary Government. But as is now known, some members of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Soviets — the names are not known — declared themselves not bound by these promises. The same day the Emperor returned to Headquarters in his own train, and received the usual Army reports from General Alexeieff while waiting the arrival of the appointed Generalissimo, the Grand Duke Nicolai. On the next day General Alexeieff was obliged to ask the Emperor not to receive the reports. The Emperor wished to go the rounds of the Staff, and take leave of the officers who had helped him in his work as Commander-in-Chief. All were astonished at the calm and self-control displayed by the Emperor. One might have thought that he was saying good-bye, not as having abdicated from the throne, but only at the natural close of their united work. On the contrary it involuntarily caused emotion to all those who were present in these historical hours. If the Emperor had occasion to speak to those serving at Headquarters each time he said to them that they were to serve Russia just as faithfully as they had done under him. The Dowager Empress arrived in Mohileff from Kieff to bid the Emperor farewell. Witnesses of their interview, of course, there were none, but standing even in front of their nearest friends it could not be said that their meeting appeared to have been under conditions so exceptional and so sorrowful.

All this time the waves of revolution in Petrograd were rising higher and higher. The hopes of those people who belonged to the Duma, and who had hurriedly organised what was called the Committee of Execution of the Imperial Duma under Rodzianko's presidency, had made a mistake in their calculation that the Emperor's abdication would quiet affairs. The small amount of bloodshed had made them confident, whereas only bloodshed could give an outlet for the awakened passions. The repressed passions of the population tried to find another outlet. But the watchword of those directing the upheaval was the same as ever. "The Revolution continues." This watchword remained even when it seemed that the Revolution had attained all it possibly could. Neither public opinion nor the Press nor the Governments of our Allies understood the danger which threatened the retention by the Russian Armies of their fighting capabilities under conditions of an internal revolutionary movement. All were hypnotised, and compared the Russian Revolution with the great French Revolution. Special attention was given to the successes of the French arms after the Revolution. Such a comparison was pardonable for the crowd, which was either not acquainted with, or had not taken the trouble to study, the question more fundamentally. They had forgotten that in France the wars after the Revolution were the results of the French Revolution. The wars were undertaken to protect the Revolution, against attempts made by the neighbouring powers. In Russia the reverse was the case, as the Revolution was apparently called forth by the war. Various agitators, partly from conscientious motives, partly for money paid by our enemies, explained to the soldiers that the war had given them all that they could expect. The main idea was to stop the war, so that they

might the sooner benefit by the fruits of the Revolution. If the French Revolutionary troops were victorious over the armies of the Western Powers on the fields of Valmy and Jemappes, it was only because France's western neighbours gave her two full years to get the army into gradual order in organisation and military training.

One must admit that in the first days of the Russian Revolution all classes of the Russian public received it with great relief. In view of the fact that the *coup d'état* had almost been bloodless — in Moscow not one drop of blood was spilt — they assumed that the new order would be introduced without trouble. Everybody believed in the healthy mind of the Russian nation. This contentment can easily be explained, in that it mainly concerned the change of order in the Interior policy. The same joyfulness was expressed by the Press of all our Allies. The reason I could not quite understand. Several days after the upheaval the Allies' Press must have become acquainted with our enemies' Press, which, also, was full of joy. One or the other of them evidently was mistaken.

Petrograd news reached us a day, and sometimes two days late. But the papers we received on March 15th brought the information that rioting crowds were bursting into the homes of all the more or less well-known statesmen of the old regime, and were confining them within the walls of the Peter and Paul Fortress. Amongst these so made prisoners were some I knew very well indeed, who had no slur on their good name, people well advanced in years. My wife had arrived in Lutsk with the intention of accompanying me on my holiday to the Caucasus. She had taken leave from her work in the front first-aid detachment in General Korniloff's Army Corps. From her came the first idea of writing to the Emperor asking him to use his influ-

ence for the people confined in the Fortress, and who now faced the risk of becoming the victims of irresponsible crowds. I agreed with her, and by March 17th I dispatched by an officer a letter to General Alexeieff. Three days later he returned with a letter from General Alexeieff in answer to mine. In this latter General Alexeieff wrote me that he was sorry to say he could do nothing to lighten the burden of those confined in the fortresses. Earlier than this I had received a telegram from the Emperor "My heart is touched; thank you." See Appendix II.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FIRST EFFECTS OF THE REVOLUTION

EVENTS had developed with unusual rapidity in Petrograd between March 12th and 23rd. Before I received General Alexeieff's answer and the telegram from the Tsar, it had become clear to me that the Tsar was helpless to influence the Provisional Government, in spite of the fact that the President of the Council of Ministers was Prince Lvoff, who had been appointed to this post by the Tsar.

Soon after came the news that three members of the Duma, from the extreme Left Wing, had arrived in Mohileff in order to accompany the Tsar to Tsarskoe Selo. Following this the arrival of Grand Duke Nicolai, who had been appointed by the Tsar as his successor in the post of Commander-in-Chief, was expected at General Headquarters. It was thought he would be there by March 23rd, but two days before that, at the request of the leaders of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, the head of the Provisional Government, Prince Lvoff, sent a special officer to meet the Grand Duke with a letter in which he informed him of the decision of the Provisional Government. The latter did not agree to leave him at the head of the Army post, because he was a member of the house of Romanoff, and secondly because his appointment had been made by the Tsar. It was an irony of fate that obliged Prince Lvoff, who was himself appointed by the last Ukaze of the abdicating Tsar, to sign this very letter. The officer who was

sent missed the train of the Grand Duke, and arrived at Mohileff a day later.

During his stay at the General Headquarters the Grand Duke had time to confirm the choice of General Alexeieff in making me the Commander-in-Chief of the western front in the place of General Evert, whom the new Minister of War, Goutchkoff, proposed to dismiss from his post. This order had been given in consequence of the hostile attitude of General Evert towards the events which had occurred, and to the way in which he dealt with the first instructions of the Provisional Government, and also perhaps because of his reputation as a Military Chief. Rumours had already reached us that the Provisional Government intended, as they said, to rejuvenate the Army, *i.e.* to change all the Chiefs whom they considered unsuitable for the posts then occupied by them. But the question was what criterion should the Provisional Government adopt to define the ability of the Chiefs, as it had no direct acquaintance with their respective abilities. There could be only one criterion — the voice of the people. But even so, how were the people to judge of the capacity even of the superior Military Chiefs, when, in accordance with the conditions of the military censorship, the names of these Military Chiefs, with rare exceptions, had not appeared in print?

Having received the telegram notifying my appointment by order of the Grand Duke to the post of Commander-in-Chief of the western front, I had not had time to give necessary instructions before I heard that the Grand Duke had handed over his own post to General Alexeieff, and had gone to the South of the Crimea. I noticed that the date of my appointment was subsequent to that of the letter from Prince Lvoff in which the Grand Duke was called upon to resign. I replied to Alexeieff that I did not consider that

I could accept unless I had the confirmation from the Provisional Government, and that, until such time, I would not come to Minsk. The Provisional Government wanted nine days for the decision, and that is why I arrived at Minsk only about April 2nd. Such a delay, during days when events passed with awful rapidity, could not but have certain consequences. When I was leaving the Special Army the Acting Committee of the Army Committee asked to present to me an address, in which the Army Committee thanked me for having contributed to a quiet change which had converted the old regime of the Army into its new state. This at the time when at every corner of the streets in Lutsk were posted coloured placards in which I spoke of the strict execution of the Holy Will of the Anointed Sovereign. I found quite another picture in Minsk. General Evert had left Minsk about two weeks before and the command was left in the hands of a temporary substitute, who, of course, had not the authority of a permanent chief even in ordinary times. Still less was it so during the first days of the Revolution. It may be said that in Minsk events directed the actions of the Chiefs, and were not dictated by the Chiefs, nor controlled by them. In the town of Minsk there was already established a Council of Workmen and of Soldiers' Deputies of the garrison and the town itself. Its sittings took place in the theatre, and were attended by 400 members. This Council was presided over by one Posner, an insignificant local authority of undefinable nationality, who described himself as a Social Revolutionary, and who later was consequently chosen for the Petrograd Soviet. He then became a Bolshevik of extreme convictions.

On the day after my arrival I was informed that the commander of one of the fighting corps had been obliged

to leave it, because at one of the meetings the soldiers expressed their distrust of him. A real desire was shown to have the right to choose the superior Chiefs. This right, which had been given to the Army by the splendid Ukaze No. 1 issued by the Petrograd Soviet, previously mentioned. But by the instruction of the Provisional Government it was only destined for the troops of the Petrograd garrison. I was also informed of other instances which showed that in some places the troops had not grasped what had been allowed and what had not been allowed, what was lawful and what was unlawful, what was possible to permit during war-time and what was not. I had to issue an order at once by which I gave amnesty for all that had happened during the first days of the Revolution, and to promise not to prosecute all the guilty who had broken the law. On the other hand I declared that from that moment the military law must again be applied and that no further breaches of it would go unpunished. Of course I recognised that in a great measure this threat would be of little value, as the Provisional Government had given orders abolishing capital punishment in all cases, even in the cases of enemy spies who were caught on the spot. Still, such an order was not without its results. The Chiefs received a basis upon which they could rely in the struggle with the disorganisation of the Army. It cannot be said that unlawful acts quite ceased, but concerning every infringement of the law which occurred in any unit of the Army I issued an Order of the Day in which I gave instructions that the guilty soldier should be tried by court martial, the procedure for which had not been changed. Such an order could not but have a good influence on those who were unsettled.

But the greatest struggle of the Military Chiefs was against separate agitators who appeared at various parts

of the front and who incited the mass of soldiers at the meetings to destroy the internal order of their units, and called upon them to be insubordinate to the Chiefs. But all my repeated demands to the Provisional Government, that the superior Chiefs should be given the right to send such persons away from the fighting lines, were left unanswered. Unwillingly I had to take other means. Having received information about the arrival of such an agitator, a subaltern officer or a soldier, I telegraphed instructions ordering him to come to me at once in Minsk, intimating that if he did not come I would hand him over to a court martial for not executing my order. There was no instance in which my order was not at once executed. It was necessary to take some further action which would prevent the return of these agitators to the ground which had already been prepared by them. But there were cases with which it was extremely difficult to deal. There were three or four occasions when the whole of the unit, and even the whole division, refused to execute at once the military order of the Chief. For the greater part these orders concerned the replacing of one unit by another in the front lines. In general the excuse was that the unit which had to replace another either had not sufficiently rested or else was not fully equipped with material necessary for the position, such as machine guns, trench mortars, etc. It is quite true that during this time such materials were not equally distributed to the regiments; all of them had not received the required quantity. They were supplied with them as they were manufactured. The military committees thought themselves right in judging as to all the military necessities of the unit to which they belonged. In cases of insubordination it was almost impossible to find the real culprits. But there was not a single case in which the orders of the Chiefs, which had been con-

firmed by me for execution, were not carried out in time. However, such a condition had no influence on the march of military events in the period of calm, but the consequences of it would be naturally felt in the times of fighting, when every hour, every minute, is dear, and sometimes unrecoverable.

Some three days after my appearance in Minsk, the new Minister of War of the Provisional Government, A. J. Goutchkoff, arrived. Though honest in motive, and a sincere and fervent patriot, he had to deal with matters of which he had only superficial knowledge. It is true that during his life he had smelt powder, for he had been a volunteer in the Boer War, when he was seriously wounded. He took part in the Manchurian campaign as a representative of the Red Cross. He had many acquaintances in military circles, from inferior chiefs to junior officers, and in his association with the Duma became thoroughly acquainted with the legislative and administrative work of the Minister of War. All this gave him some illusory idea of how troops lived, and of military conditions, but there were big gaps in his knowledge, which he probably did not conceive, and he certainly was not acquainted with the psychology of military work, the psychology of the Chief, and the psychology of the troops. As his first aim he considered it necessary to rejuvenate the Army, *i.e.* to replace all those Chiefs who, according to such information as he had gathered from those whom he trusted, and from opinions which were circulating about them, were not suitable for the posts which they occupied. This list of these persons was such a big one that it would have meant the change of the greater number from the commanders of the corps to the lower ranks. It must be remembered that the change of every Chief is followed by a change of the whole hierarchical

ladder up to the commanders of companies, because all are raised a step, and the majority of them often change their place of service. According to that, one is forced to the conclusion that all the good derived from a change of Chiefs is foiled by this change in mass, which follows the replacement of one Chief by another. Besides this, in their places came persons of quite mediocre ability, sometimes lower in capacity than those who had been considered unsuitable.

Where necessary, I never stopped at the change of a commander, especially when it was intended as a warning or an example. For instance, I changed one of the commanders of an army after the unsuccessful defence, in the end of March 1917, of the so-called Tchervishe "tête-de-pont" on the River Stohod. Having inquired into this affair, I found there had been great negligence on the part of the superior officers, the responsibility for which, above all, lay on the commander of the army. For this it was my duty to show to the troops, who did not quite know me, that I was one of those who did not hesitate to adopt the harshest measures when circumstances demanded them. This occasion helped me, for I could show a concrete case which really demanded it. The lack of success at Tchervishe cost us a couple of thousand killed, wounded, and prisoners. We did not lose any guns, but that was only because they were not where they should have been. Otherwise, probably the Germans would not have decided to take the Tchervishe "tête-de-pont" by direct attack.

The new Minister of War arrived at Minsk with the list already marked of those whom it was intended to dismiss from their posts or, on the contrary, to promote. Unfortunately I could not express a definite opinion on the greater part of them, and I had not come into personal contact with them, and was unable to defend them or to

acquiesce in their removal. I did, however, try to secure in their places officers whose military reputation I knew very well. But my demands were only satisfied to a small degree, for most of those on the Ministers' list had already received high appointments on the other fronts which Goutchkoff had visited before he came to Minsk. Unwillingly I had to be directed by the opinion of Goutchkoff, and also by the opinion of the Chief of the Staff at the front, General Kvietzinsky, who had just received the Command of an Army. In three armies that were on my front I had to supersede one commander, and the other two were to be replaced by order of the Provisional Government. How blindly Goutchkoff believed what was told him can be judged from this circumstance. As General Kvietzinsky was appointed to a higher post, I chose to succeed him Major-General Alexeieff, well known to me as Chief of the Staff of the Special Army. In spite of our good relations, Goutchkoff categorically refused to sanction such an appointment. It must be confessed that he was partially right, as Major-General Alexeieff at the beginning of the war, commanded a regiment with the rank of colonel, and such an appointment would have been a big jump in his service. But this was not the principal reason. The reason was that Alexeieff was considered unsuitable. Surely I, who had spent two years of campaigning with him, was the better judge of that. Those who trusted me by making me Commander-in-Chief at the front ought to have shown their trust in me in the choice of my closest assistant, the more so because it was while I worked with him as my assistant that I acquired the reputation which raised me to that post. I could have raised what is called an administrative question, but I hoped that in time this would come about by itself, and meanwhile I offered to Alexeieff the post of

Quartermaster-General, as Kvietzinsky had taken with him the Quartermaster-General of that front to be Chief of Staff of the Army. I hoped that later Alexeieff would become Chief of Staff, when my nominee would receive a higher appointment. To tell the truth Major-General Alexeieff almost constantly carried out the duties of Chief of Staff of the front until the end of the month of August, almost two months after I left the post of Commander-in-Chief.

During Goutchkoff's stay in Minsk, there was the meeting of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Committee of the town and its outskirts, and there were present representatives of the troops, but the regular representation of the troops had not yet been organised. Until that time I had no occasion to visit these meetings. Goutchkoff wished to attend one of them, and was rather surprised when he learnt from me that I would take advantage of his presence to go there with him. Having finished our work at home, Goutchkoff and I drove in the evening to the theatre where the meeting was being held, and we went straight on to the stage on which, at a large table, were sitting the members of the Council, presided over by Posner. At our entrance, all rose in their places and greeted us with applause. After words of greeting from the President of the meeting, Goutchkoff turned to the assembly and made a patriotic speech. After him my turn came. It was the first occasion on which I had had an opportunity of addressing such a gathering. The first, it is true, but far from the last, for in the course of time there broke out an epidemic of all kinds of meetings on every possible pretext. It was necessary to appear at least once at every meeting and make a speech. All kinds of speeches were as a rule short, but some lasted an hour and a half at least.

And what meetings they were! The most important was, of course, the meeting "of the whole front," with delegates from all units, about 1,500 altogether, but among them were workmen of the town of Minsk. Then followed gatherings of doctors, of Sisters of Charity, Red Cross Societies, elementary teachers of the Minsk districts, military priests, a Polish meeting, a White Russian meeting, meetings of veterinaries and chemists. At last it became necessary to put a limit to them, since such people as chauffeurs, hospital attendants, etc., also wanted to hold one. I was compelled to declare that such gatherings in the town of Minsk could only be held if sanctioned by me. It must not be forgotten that up to now all classes of people wished to take advantage of the right to meet, and it was only by relying upon my personal authority that I could hope to regulate something which was not specifically laid down by the instructions of the new Government.

Goutchkoff's speech, like mine, dealt in a general way with the importance of continuing the struggle with the enemy with all our strength and all our means. It was pointed out that all attempts to fraternise with Germans must cease; and the request was emphasised that those who were then present should influence in these directions the other committees of which they were members. All this was rceived by the assembly not only with sympathy, but with enthusiasm, and we left with the same warmth of demonstration with which we had been greeted. There was the fullest hope that this patriotic enthusiasm would spread to the troops, after having been fortified at the meeting. It seemed that the tottering idea of the Revolution would pass; that measures for re-establishing discipline among the troops and for the support of the authority of the Chiefs

would be taken, and that the Army would attain more strength and consequently would increase its fighting capability. Such were the bright hopes of the month of March. It seemed as if the troops who suffered revolutionary fermentations had again reverted to the sense of orderly administration and government. To strengthen it, it was necessary to apply rational measures coming from the Central Authority. After this preparatory meeting was concluded, on rules worked out by this meeting, the Conference of the whole Front was prepared. But in this matter I was deprived of the opportunity of directing them. I came to the conclusion that if I applied here those methods which gave satisfactory results in the Special Army, the strain might be such that with little pressure the tightening cord would snap. One incident might be enough to show that behind me there was no real force, and then my authority, which until now had not deserted me, would very soon diminish until it ceased to exist. The work confided to me was too serious to risk this. Moreover, as time went on, from different places and from the various Military Chiefs comforting news was reported; the hope that the revolutionary wave would gradually decrease, and that the spirit of the Army would return to its normal state, became strengthened.

The Meeting of the Front units was assembled in the middle of April. The Preparatory Committee had developed two currents, Left and Right. One section invited the President of the Duma, Rodzianko, and some important member as of the Duma, such as Roditcheff, Maklakoff and Maslennikoff. The other section asked the leaders of Petrograd Soviet, Tchheidze, Tzeretelli, and Skobeleff. The last named was the same man who in October 1917 was preparing to go to Paris as the delegate of the Petro-

grad Soviets to take part in the International Congress, which was not held after all.

On the appointed day the opening of the Conference of the Front took place. For the opening came, from Petrograd, Rodzianko and the members of the Duma, Roditcheff and Maslennikoff. In their presence the meeting was opened. But before this for almost a whole day and night there had been conflicting views as to who should be chosen as the President. The Workmen's Party with the soldiers belonging to this party wanted as President this same Posner whom I have mentioned; the representatives of the military party wanted as their President a volunteer of artillery who was in ordinary life an attorney. For the sake of peace the latter gave in, and in this way Posner became President, and the artillery volunteer Assistant President. The opening speeches included Rodzianko's, mine, and the speeches of Roditcheff and Maslennikoff. All these speeches were full of patriotism, with a call to fight with the enemy outside, for the conquest of the enemy, and for the strengthening of the liberties for which the Revolution had striven. All this was received with unanimity, enthusiasm, and noisy applause. Roditcheff said that for a month every morning on waking he had congratulated himself that he was a free man. It was only due to fortunate circumstances, and to the fact that he kept away from all politics, that he was not deprived of his freedom, and did not suffer detention in the Peter and Paul fortress.

On the third day of the meeting, taking advantage of the presence of the Petrograd guests, was arranged an enthusiastic procession of the members through the streets of the town. With a band at the head they marched to the public square of the town. They asked me to take a

place at the head of the procession, having on my right Rodzianko, and on my left the President of the meeting. In the square had been erected a high platform from which the speeches were to be made and greetings given to the crowd. With the others I had to mount the platform. I was the only one who thought fit to address myself to the citizens, male and female, of the town of Minsk. The male half of the population, in the person of their representatives, had probably forgotten that it had declared the equality of all, without any exception, or regard to sex. Fortunately the greetings were short, for the big square and the roofs of the houses were all crowded by the garrison and population, and the speeches had to be made with voices raised as high as possible, and every word articulated. At the end, however, there was some confusion not without its comical side. The organisers asked those who were at the head of the procession to take their places for the return. Accordingly I, with the honoured guests, left the platform just as the representative of the Petrograd Soviet, a young workman who had probably practised at the public meetings, was finishing his speech. But those around, noticing that the procession seemed to be moving, rushed away and ceased to be interested in the orator. Offended by such conduct, the speaker gesticulated something, waved his hand, and then left the platform with a discontented air. This evidently was not a part of the programme. The organisers were annoyed, but they could not restore the broken order.

The procession returned in motor-cars. In the places of honour on the first car which followed the lorry, occupied by the band, Rodzianko and I took our seats; on the front seats were the President of the meeting, Posner, and

the member of the Duma, Roditcheff. The Presidents of meetings did not yet consider themselves the controllers of the fate of the State, as the first of the first; I do not say first of equals. The ecstasy of the crowd filling the streets was great. For the greater part it was composed of the Jewish population. There was no lack of red flags and red ribbons. Probably I was the only one who did not wear these red emblems. On our way people gave us many flowers, but in the town it was difficult to find flowers of the Revolutionary colour. In a bouquet they made only small red spots. I do not know whether it was by design or by chance that the leaders of the Petrograd Workmen's and Soldiers' Council came to the meeting rather late. At that time the spirit of the gathering greatly changed; its patriotic feeling faded away greatly as some of these men spoke provocatively about the necessity of the struggle of the different classes. During the speeches of the new Petrograd guests I was not present, but from those who were there I gathered that speeches, in general, were of a patriotic tone. To the questions that were asked they answered in the same spirit. Before their departure all three, Tchheidze, Tzeretelli, and Skobeleff, came to see me. Their modest speeches and moderate point of view, the political opinions expressed by them in my cabinet, unwillingly disposed me in their favour. When the conversation turned to the future Constitutional Assembly, Skobeleff expressed the same thought that I had, and declared to me that he quite understood that it was impossible to cry "Hurrah" and to carry one's card to the ballot box. On leaving, one of them, Tzeretelli I think, said to me, "But we could easily understand each other, General, if we knew each other better."

Before the close I considered it my duty once more to appear within the walls of the theatre. In my farewell speech I especially wanted to explain to the members who came from the troops in what measure they were responsible for the future spirit of the troops, and for the strengthening of the sense of fighting for final victory. I must say that I noticed no difference in the feeling of the meeting towards me personally, or to my words. There was the usual greeting, at my entrance, the same enthusiasm for the patriotic call. The meeting was over, and after it the Executive Committee remained, but not under the Presidency of Posner. As President was chosen a captain of artillery. Until my departure the members of this committee in general tried to render assistance when there was disorder among the troops, and in cases where men at the rear of the Army wanted to plunder, or were disorderly during a railway journey. When delegates arrived directly from the junior military committees, they invariably brought them to me, in order to receive instructions as to the manner in which to regulate or decide this or that question which had arisen. I cannot but say that it was a difficult time for the Military Chiefs; on the one hand, the Higher Command ordered them to begin the preparatory work for the future offensive operations; on the other hand, the greater part of their time was passed in settling odd cases arising out of the disturbance of the normal military life. Let me add that only those Chiefs who spent all their time amongst their men could successfully continue their work. They were able not only to speak to the men, but were not at a loss when the experienced orators at the meetings tried to put them in an awkward position. In a word, here was required presence of mind and spirit. From this it will be clear how difficult was the position of those

Chiefs who entered upon a new post and who received under their command units which they did not know, and which did not know the new Chief. All was quite new ground for them.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ATTEMPTED REORGANISATION OF THE ARMY

A CHARACTERISTIC incident happened shortly afterwards at the Congress of the Red Cross. Those participating in this reunion, delegates from all the Red Cross institutions, about 200 persons in number, were doctors, chemists, assistant surgeons, sanitarians, stretcher-bearers, and Sisters of Charity. The Central Administration of the Red Cross Society in Petrograd, informed of this meeting, sent its representative in the person of one of the assistant presidents of the Red Cross Society, Count Beniksen, a member of the Imperial Duma.

After two days at the meeting, he came to me in great despair, announcing that the decisions of the Congress were inclined to establish an order of things under which the work of the Society would become impossible, especially in war-time conditions. He asked me if I could not come to the meeting and exercise some influence on the side of more sensible and more practical decisions. We arranged between us that at the next morning I would go to the meeting which was being held in the same theatre of the town.

The democratisation of the Army had certainly advanced towards the beginning of May. The members of the Congress did not consider it necessary to rise when I appeared among those presiding, or to salute, in my person, the Commander-in-Chief of the western armies. The Congress was not presided over by a doctor, as one would have expected, but by a sanitarian without medical educa-

tion. My speech, addressed to the Congress, lasted less than half an hour. When I had finished I left the meeting at once, and it would be difficult for me to define what impression my words made upon the assembly. It was not until late in the evening, after the closing of the meeting, that I learned from Beniksen that immediately after my departure an extraordinary tumult arose, the result of which was that when the assembly became a little quieter they decided to choose a new President. It was also decided to consider the two days' work of the Congress void, and to begin the work afresh. What magical words could have led to such a result? I suppose it came about by the argument propounded by me, which was that the Red Cross must exist for the Army, and not the Army for the Red Cross. I had further told them that they ought to consider all questions first from a scientific and medical standpoint, and that if they ignored these things I could do without the help of the Red Cross, and would send all those serving in it, without exception, into the trenches.

An agreeable exception to all these gatherings, as well as to those of the Army and local population, was the meeting of Polish delegates, whose first object was to ascertain how the discipline ought to be maintained. A patriotic note was struck all through the speeches of the Congress. They spoke, first of all, of the formation of efficient troops, grounded on ordinary discipline, and afterwards of the proposals for the re-establishing of a free and independent Poland. The assembly had enough tact not to mention if the soil on which they were assembled would enter into the composition of the future Poland. One must remember that in the Government of Minsk the Poles are in a large minority, but their intellectual weight is certainly considerable, as the majority of the big land-owners and a consider-

able part of the town population are of Polish nationality. The peasantry, the most numerous class of the population, is, without exception, White-Russian and of the Orthodox religion.

Visits to meetings did not form an essential part of my work and my duty. Hope had not yet died that the Revolutionary tide which had caught the Army would gradually ebb, and that, with the aid of normal military discipline, order among the troops would be finally re-established, and with it the efficiency of the Army. All this, taken together, gave a good ground for continuing the energetic preparations for the summer offensive. All the indications were that the attacking capacity of the Germans was decreasing, as otherwise they would not have missed an opportunity to attack us with full hope of success. Our future offensive action, already sanctioned by the Emperor in January, was left without alteration, *i.e.* to deal the principal blow on the south-western front, with a secondary attack on the other fronts. The latter was to be done with the aid of not less than twelve or fifteen divisions. There was no ground for believing that the time and place for such an attack would be unexpected to the Germans. The fraternising in many places of Russian soldiers with the Germans, as well as the slow work in the preparations of the offensive, helped the Germans, so the more assiduous preparations were needed, and the introduction of as great a quantity as was possible of material forces and means. The principal preparatory work under existing conditions consisted in the restoration of a good Army, and in raising its moral state. The unfortunate idea of forming storming battalions, and "battalions of death," had not yet been adopted. We tried to raise to the usual height the efficiency of the whole unit, and of all units.

In some cases it was entirely successful; for instance the 1st Siberian Corps, one of the best fighting corps, had not shown any signs of disorganisation nor loss of martial spirit. The other corps, having passed through a period of the Revolutionary ferment, came little by little to a more normal state. Partly for the control of the work of the troops and Staffs, partly to directly influence them, I had to undertake an inspection of the troops. In pre-Revolutionary times, I limited my review to those on the front lines in the trenches. Of the reserves I visited only those which had newly arrived to join the troops under me. I could see only an insignificant percentage of the men of the sector in trenches, but the fact of my arrival was at once known in all the sector, and it contented me. The other sectors and units learnt about it from the Army Order, which was distributed among the troops in printed form three or four days after my visit. But under the present conditions personal communication with men was indispensable to me, in order that I might have a direct influence upon them. That was why I could not content myself with visiting only the front trenches, and I had to give more time for seeing the regiments who formed the corps and army reserves, where I could gather whole regiments by adding to them some chosen men from the neighbouring troops. The tour of the troops, their inspection, the conversations with separate men, always ended with an address to the whole regiment. I had already made such speeches in pre-Revolutionary times, but the form of those was quite different. Besides this, in previous times I always gathered together the officers separately, not only to thank them for their services, but also to show them all that was faulty and had been noticed by me. And I then often seized the opportunity of reminding these officers about some fundamental prin-

ciples, which every chief desiring to make easier his difficult military task ought to follow. I adjured officers to be strict in regard to themselves and to their own duties, for those conditions always gave the right to be exacting towards their subordinates. It meant that one must be in all one's life an example to one's inferiors, not in the sense that in the moment of danger one should put oneself at the head of one's men, in order to give an example of bravery, but with the aim that one's life, private as well as public, should be worthy of imitation. Under these conditions the Chief would not be bound to show during the battle an example that, in general, is paid at the price of blood or life. Such an example would not only be unnecessary, but the subordinates would even try to prevent the Chief from such an act because it was in their own interests not to lose such a Chief. Further, I invariably pointed out to the officers that their duty and their own interest consisted in putting themselves near their men, to learn as quickly as possible their needs and satisfy them; that they ought not to fear that such close touch would diminish their dignity as Chiefs; but this, of course, ought not to develop into familiarity. Such counsels in time of peace would be quite superfluous, as they formed the rules of the military profession; but taking into consideration the quick change in the officers' staff in war-time, and the mass of the young men who had not any life experience, it was indispensable.

But the peculiarity of the Revolutionary time, the jealous feeling of the mass of the soldiers that they must not be separated from the officers, the necessity of raising the prestige of the officers and of not lecturing them before the soldiers, all this unhappily led to the abandonment of the private talk with the officers. I had to limit myself in giving suitable orders to the senior officers, in order

that they, gradually, and in this way, could instruct the young officers under their command.

The work of the Staffs showed that all the preparatory details were being evolved with great care. All new methods which had been worked out in the earlier years of the campaign were adopted. At first attention was paid to combined artillery and aviation. Positions were being prepared for the placing of the heavy guns, which were to arrive as late as possible in order that their co-operation might surprise the Germans. Among my military inspections was a visit to the 1st Siberian Corps, which was commanded by General Plieszkoff, who brought it from Siberia, and which distinguished itself in a satisfactory manner. At one time it was proposed to him to take the command of an Army, but he refused, intending to remain to the finish of the war with his own Siberians. Up to that time the Siberian Corps was only such in name, as the greater number who entered this corps were from different parts of Russia, and the percentage of Siberians was quite insignificant. But the spirit and traditions of this corps, by right of succession, passed on to the new contingents. My visit to the corps occurred at the same time as the Conference of the Delegate Committee of the corps. Having arrived towards night, I met the Committee in the little square before the house of the commander. The work of the Committee was stopped, and first the President, and afterwards one of the soldiers, who took part in the meeting, greeted my arrival and that of the commander of the corps with a warm, patriotic speech. In his address to me he called me their father, and finishing his speech he unexpectedly took my hand and kissed it. This took me by surprise, but if one takes into consideration the spirit of that time, and the relation of the troops to the Chiefs, this act was not to be

regarded as an act of servility, but as one of civil courage; nevertheless, it was received by all with extreme approbation. Unusually warm and sincere was the relation between the men and the beloved commander of the corps. It seemed that one could rely in every respect upon such a corps. But the publication by the Provisional Government in the end of May of the so-called rights of those in the service was sufficient to disorganise even such detachments. At the beginning of July the same Committee of the corps expressed distrust of General Plieszkoff, who was accused of ambition and self-interest. Consequently General Plieszkoff had to give up his command.

The soldiers held very jealously to the right of wearing emblems of a red colour, and to the display on solemn occasions of red banners and posters with different inscriptions, though understanding that bearing them in the ranks was not in keeping with military regulations. I do not know why, but in no case when troops came for my reviews did they bring out any red rags, though I never gave any formal order about it. The only exception to this was the review of one of the regiments of the 51st Division, which belonged to the second Caucasian Corps. When I arrived in front of the regiment I noticed a number of banners and posters with inscriptions. Among them were also patriotic inscriptions, but in the middle of the band was a large red banner with the white inscription "Long life to the Democratic Republic." This banner was carried by a bandsman of a Jewish type. Under the Russian inscription was one in the Jewish language, probably meaning the same thing. It must be explained by the fact that the Jews, being a musical nation, usually composed the greater percentage of the military bands. Having finished inspecting all the companies of the regiment, I returned to

the right flank, and turning to the bandsman who held the banner, I asked him if he could explain to me what "Democratic Republic" meant. He could not give me any answer. Then I turned to the whole band, and asked who among them could tell me the meaning of these words. Still getting no answer, I turned to the men of the Scout command, who stood near, with the same question. From one of the rear ranks, a non-commissioned officer of a brave and rather intelligent aspect, offered to answer me. He gave an explanation in the following words: "It is that which gave us the Revolution and all liberties." I turned to those around and asked if they had anything to object to that explanation, but I did not get any answer. It appeared they were satisfied with this. Really the truth was that not one of them had an idea, not only of what "Democratic Republic" meant, but even what "Republic" itself was.

In the month of May, at Minsk, a party of Socialist delegates, who had arrived from France and England, came to me; members of the French Parliament, and representatives of the English Trade Unions. They were accompanied by an officer from the Ministry of War, who explained to me that they were very depressed, considering that how things were established the Army was losing its fighting capability. Considering that it was in our interest to give these people the most exact impression of our efficiency — which at this time, thanks to the influence of the Chiefs, had gradually increased — I decided first to give them an opportunity of visiting the troops in the positions and in reserve, after which I invited them to come again to me, and to exchange opinions. I wanted them to see the Army as it really was. After two days' tour of the troops in positions and in reserve, they returned to me. To my

astonishment their views had quite changed. They were full of hope; especially were they impressed by their visit to the Siberian Corps. But in the other units also they found plenty of martial spirit and patriotic feeling. In order to give them a clearer view, I had to say the contrary of what I had said before; I told them not to rely too implicitly upon what they had already seen, not to be too quick in forming first impressions. All the same they went away with raised spirits. But their next visit was to the 5th Army.

At this time this Army was going through a severe crisis of the Revolutionary upheaval. The effect of this upheaval could not but have been apparent to the eyes of our Allies. The result of it was that they went to Petrograd quite depressed. But imagine our astonishment when we learnt in the course of time from the foreign papers that they were telling the reporters of papers in neutral countries of the change which had come over the scene, and that they were referring to Russian troops as troops full of fighting capability, martial spirit and revolutionary patriotism, which gave them the best hope for the future. It may be that this attitude was adopted to deceive our enemies, but they, we had good reason to know, were better informed than these gentlemen. If any were deceived it was only our Allies, and not our enemies. All that I can say is, if they were sincere, it means that these people, like so many foreigners and travellers, were too impressionable, and jumped to conclusions too readily.

The heads of the Allied Missions did not come to Minsk. Their stay in Petrograd happened to be during the period of the most intense struggle between the Provisional Government and the Workmen's and Soldiers' Soviets, for power and influence over the crowd and country. This

struggle was so silently carried on that for some time it passed unnoticed by the Army. We heard nothing of it until later. Nominally the whole power was in the hands of the Provisional Government and all instructions came in its name. But actually no single instruction of the Provisional Government could be published before it was considered by the Executive Committee, of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Soviets which were not held in public and in which only one member of the Provisional Government took part, the Minister of Justice, Kerensky. This contest was, of course, known in Petrograd. Public opinion, and especially that influenced by the crowd, was paying much attention to what the leading European nations, our Allies, thought about our Soviets. The special attention which was shown to the Soviets by the Allied Delegates had the effect of raising them in their own estimation, and especially in the eyes of the Petrograd workman and soldier, who without reading the newspapers knew about the rivalries between the Provisional Government and the Soviets at this time.

In the Ministry of War, under the ægis of these Soviets, with participation of the Soviets delegates, took place a Commission, presided over by the former Minister of War, General Polivanoff. To this Commission was assigned the framing of the rules governing the rights of men in military service. To the Committee were called, on the choice of the Ministry of War, some military chiefs, but not of higher rank than commanders of brigades. But it was mostly composed of the delegates of Workmen's and Soldiers' Soviets. In the beginning of May I received a telegram from the Minister of War, Goutchkoff, containing the projected rules for service, with the request that I would give my opinion on them. I asked the commanders of the

ister of Foreign Affairs, Milioukoff, left the Provisional Government at the same time.

On May 16th we went to Petrograd and drove straight from the train to the house of Prince Lvoff, where were gathered all the members of the Provisional Government. It had been decided by the Provisional Government to replace Goutchkoff by Kerensky. They thought by such an appointment to satisfy the democratic wishes of the Committees of the Army. Milioukoff was replaced by Tereshtchenko, probably only because he was the only member of the Government who could speak several languages fluently. His earlier training and service did not at all fit him for the post of director of the foreign affairs of the country, especially in so difficult a time. No order had been issued authorising the changes of Ministers, as disputes had already arisen as to whose signature such an appointment should bear — whether that of the President of the Duma, in the capacity of President of the Provisional Committee of the Duma, or that of Prince Lvoff, or finally, ought it to carry both signatures? On the first appointment of the members of the Provisional Government in the early days of March, the question was not settled as to who should confirm the appointment of the new members of the Government in the event of the resignation of one or several members, and further if all the Ministers of the Provisional Government should resign at once. Evidently they hoped that the first committee of the Provisional Government would be able to lead the country till the Constitutional Assembly, according to the Tsar's Manifesto of Abdication.

Common sense would have suggested that the confirmation of the new Ministers, and especially the election of people for the composition of a new Government, ought

to have been done by some person or persons who stood outside the Government Staff. But all the plans of the Provisional Government had for their object the retention of all power in their own hands. On this occasion the orders were signed by Rodzianko and Lvoff, but the next time the Provisional Government did not take into account the Executive Committee of the Imperial Duma, and the signature of Rodzianko had disappeared.

This was the first time I had had occasion to meet Kerensky. Rarely attending meetings of the Imperial Duma, I never had an opportunity of seeing him in the chair. Having told the Provisional Government what had brought us to the capital, we expressed a wish to state our opinions, not only to the members of the Provisional Government, but before the Executive Committee of the Duma, and especially before the leaders and directors of the Petrograd Soviets. I proposed to invite the Executive Committee which numbered sixty men, but Prince Lvoff wished to invite only the Council of this Committee, which was composed of nine or ten men, affirming that the most influential members were in this Council, and that the assembly of the whole Committee would be too large and would only cause some undesirable incidents.

their various fronts. I had to illustrate the international position of Russia, her duties in regard to the Allies, and the consequence which would result if these obligations were not observed. In his concluding words Alexeieff was to lay down the minimum requirements which would enable us to carry out the work which we had undertaken to accomplish.

Prince Lvoff presided over the Conference; on his left sat Alexeieff, with Brussiloff and Dragomiroff. On the right of Lvoff I sat; on my right was Tcherbatcheff and close to him Kerensky. General Alexeieff first of all spoke about the proposals sent to us of the rights of a military man. He said, that though the Chiefs did not exclude the possibility of making regulations as to the rights of military men, but that those rights must also define the duties of every man in the service, and the rights of the Chief. Though the Provisional Government had not given instructions that the existing military rules and statutes, including disciplinary laws, should be altered, it had not given instructions for their continued proper observance. Because of that agitators constantly told the troops that the Revolution which gave freedom to the people had also abolished all military obligations, as rules that restricted freedom.

Three Commanders-in-Chief, as we had agreed, in glowing colours and with striking examples, showed how there had penetrated into the Army new "defeatist" ideas, the propaganda having spread with the appeal made to the lower animal senses of the men and the crowd. When my turn came I also disclosed some facts. I read a telegram I received from my Chief of the Staff, Major-General Alexeieff, in which he informed me that an agitator had arrived with authority from the Committee of the Soviet, and that for two days a division which should have taken

part in preparations for an offensive, under the influence of this man's defeatist propaganda had quite got out of the control of the Chief; and that this agitator preached a doctrine even different from the last decisions of the Soviet. I explained that I had ordered by telegraph the arrest of this person, assuming him to be an impostor, although I was not certain that the Chiefs would find it possible to carry out the order. Afterwards it was made clear that this agitator really had permission to visit the front from the Committee mentioned. Having expounded to the assembly the international position of Russia, present and future, I passed to her present internal state. I said that the general watchword remained "The Revolution continues." My advice was not to do two things at the same time. Either the Revolution must be stopped, or at least discontinued until the end of the war, or else there was the grave risk of throwing Russia herself into an abyss and, together with her, the Revolution itself and all its conquests. Unless the leaders of political life in Russia changed their tactics, they would find that in the near future the same democracy for which they now fought would curse their names and their memory. They ought not to forget that the man who cannot satisfy his elementary material necessities does not require liberty. The economic disorder of the country which was spreading would, above all, reflect on the democracy. At that moment the workmen and soldiers, the latter being peasants, controlled the government of the country in union, but the time would come when both these classes would understand that they were mistaken, and that their interests were often different. These very democratic elements would in time go fighting with each other.

I reminded them that there had been a time when the Tsar, who was abdicating, was accused of playing the game

of the Germans, in regard to internal politics. So a time would come when those who sat there would be accused of just the same things and with much more foundation should they not change their own political views. I also declared that, if the proposals of Army changes were carried out as they were projected, I saw no possibility of fulfilling the duties which the Provisional Government had entrusted to me. They would bring about such disorganisation in the Army, which, little by little, was becoming restored, that it would become an easy prey for the enemy, and the eventual result would be much bloodshed, especially of the democracy itself. If the Conference cared to take upon themselves the responsibility of this blood, that was for their own conscience, but I for one would not take the responsibility of it upon myself. I had never, in military plans, been deterred from making a decision because it would cause bloodshed, but I had never called for actions when I knew blood would flow without result. I finished my address by saying that from all the tribunes in the land alarming voices resounded the note saying the country was in danger, but I would go farther and say that the country was on the verge of ruin, and that they were pushing her to it.

Alexeieff followed me, and in a very plain manner demanded from the representatives of the Soviet that they should stop their work of destruction. He told them that they had disorganised the Army, and that they must go among the troops in the trenches and restore that which they had destroyed. It was foolish, he said, to give rights to the people without also laying duties upon them. He called upon the patriotic feeling of the Soviet, asked from them real help for the restoration of the fighting capabilities of the Army, without which all the efforts of the Chiefs would be in vain; told them that their duty was to uphold

the authority of the Military Chief and not overthrow it; and that Russia would have to pay too big a price for all that was being done.

After Alexeieff had finished a member of the Council of the Soviet, Tzeretelli, asked to be allowed to speak. He tried rather weakly to justify the prolongation of the Revolution. He said that it is easier to begin a Revolution than to stop it; that they, on their side, did all that was possible, but that it was difficult for them to steer against the current. He protested against the sharp manner in which they had been accused. General Alexeieff answered Tzeretelli. Then Kerensky asked to be heard, and made a short speech, the aim of which was to smooth off any rough edges that had been created in the discussion.

Afterwards another member of the Council, Skobeleff, asked for a word. His speech was rather colourless, and did not remain in my memory. Then I rose once more to reply to some of the points of Tzeretelli and Skobeleff. After this Prince Lvoff declared that the subject had been exhausted, and he closed the Conference. When the members left they were surrounded by a crowd of newspaper reporters, most of whom threw themselves upon the new Minister of War, Kerensky. But he rather sharply snapped at them.

I had to listen to an original suggestion from a landowner known to me, from the provinces of Ukraine, though it was expressed ironically. He said that in a few days a Conference of the Ukrainian Council would be assembled at Kieff, and probably intended to declare its separation from Russia. He said that he intended to make a proposal which would probably meet with general approval, that the new State should begin its political life clear of all debts, and that in the Declaration of Independence there

should be a declaration that Ukraine did not impose upon herself any debts contracted by the Russian Government. To this, also in a joking way, I replied that his idea would meet with approval so long as they did not mistake him for an agitator, and turn him out of the Conference.

That same evening we were going back to our respective stations. Before leaving Petrograd I had time to visit the British Ambassador, Sir George Buchanan, having first informed him of my intended visit. I wanted to talk with him about the mutual relations of Russia and the Allies. Though I agreed that the specific weight of Russia in the Alliance had become noticeably less, nevertheless I wanted to emphasise to him that it was in the interest of the Allies to remain loyal to Russia; that to leave Russia to the free will of fate would mean giving her over to the influence of Germany; and this would mean that, in time, Germany, having become strong by the untouched and inexhaustible resources of Russia, would turn her forces against Western Europe in an overwhelming struggle. When I got back to Minsk, hoping that the leaders in Petrograd would become more reasonable and take measures to reconstruct the Army, I actively busied myself with the last instructions for the preparation of the advance operations fixed for the middle of June. During the first months of the Revolution the supplies not only became worse, but failed altogether. But in the month of May 1917 the supply of provisions became much better. The Provisional Government lost no time in letting, not only Russia, but the whole world, know that our conditions had improved. They attributed it, however, to their own wise management. But in reality it was due not so much to the Provisional Government, but to the work of the agents of the abdicated Government. Thanks to

the instructions of the Ministry of Agriculture in the months of November and December, a continuous supply of corn and, partly, of flour, was transported to the wharves on the river from the provinces of the Volga, the true granary of Russia. But only with the opening of navigation was it possible for these stores, which comprised more than a million tons, to be sent by water into the centre of Russia and to the railways which supplied the Army.

In the active preparation for advance the new Minister, Kerensky, also took part. His activity was of a quite special character. He made a tour of all the armies, especially of those where the advance was intended, and addressed the troops. With exciting speeches he provoked the sincere enthusiasm of the crowd, which he probably regarded as deep-seated and lasting. I counted on his visit to Minsk, and hoped to have a serious conversation with him, showing him the instability of the Army on a dangerous incline towards disorganisation, and the need of steadying. I awaited his arrival at Minsk, but in vain. I realised, after my stay in Petrograd, that the principal leaders of the Soviet, those who were directing the life of the country, and, as they expressed it, were " deepening the Revolution," were not sincere when they affirmed that they would undertake all measures for the reconstruction of the Army. I saw that they recognised that their position might be compared to swimming between Scylla and Charybdis, that they understood what the disorganisation of the Army meant — the victory of Germany and the end of the present free position of the country. On the other hand, the rebuilding of the Army, they knew, meant giving Russia again into the hands of the Military Chiefs and yet they were more afraid of this than of the German invasion, for

it meant the certain elimination of these demagogues from power. And the preservation of power was to them the dearest thing on earth. They did not care what price the people paid for that.

In all his visits Kerensky did not meet with enthusiasm. There were cases where the contrary happened. In the 12th Army, near Riga, a soldier in the trenches entered into a dispute with him. Then the democratic Minister of War shouted at him, "Hold your tongue when the Minister of War is speaking to you." Only just before this he had told the soldier not to call him Minister of War, but simply "comrade." In Riga his patriotic speeches were met with mockery, and there he stopped making speeches. In one of the southern armies he ordered two regiments to gather to meet him; the regiments collected in their headquarters, but one of them did not want to come to the meeting-place. The adjutant sent by Kerensky was received with insults, addressed not to him actually, but to the Minister of War. Kerensky decided not to appear before this regiment.

The first order of Kerensky after taking the post of Minister was the declaration that the senior Military Chiefs under no conditions had a right to leave their posts, to ask for their dismissal, or to resign. It was clear to me that this was directed against me, or perhaps he had been informed by his brother-in-law, the Colonel of the General Staff, who served in the "Stafka," that during the Conference of May 14th, at which this Colonel assisted, the commanders of the armies foresaw the necessity of leaving their posts in case of the realisation of the projected rights of the military men. In time that brother-in-law of Kerensky's was appointed chief of his military cabinet — a most democratic proceeding. In the middle of May the Minister of

War published these rights as they were framed by General Polivanoff's Commission. I at once wrote a report in the name of the Commander-in-Chief, Alexeieff, in which I stated that the ukaze of the Minister of War deprived me of my right to ask for my dismissal from my post, and that was why I left the Provisional Government to judge for itself whether I could remain under these conditions, without the means of carrying on the task entrusted to me. I also declared that I discarded the moral responsibility, the responsibility of my conscience, for all that might happen in the future in directing the troops at the front. A copy of this report, with a letter, I sent to Prince Lvoff, as the head of the Provisional Government. I had to wait rather a long time for the answer. In reality the Provisional Government signed the order for my dismissal on June 5th, at the same time as that of General Alexeiff. The latter was signed at the request of the Soviet. The Government did not decide to publish the order for my dismissal in conjunction with the dismissal of General Alexeieff, and I learnt about it on June 9th. In an indirect way I was told that the Provisional Government after my report wanted me to command a regiment, but, having consulted wiser leaders, they declared that I should receive the command of a division, a position in which I began the war. At first I thought I would answer the Generalissimo in a rather sharp manner, asking him to explain to the Provisional Government how the latter contradicted itself in making such a decision, as it was entirely opposed to the newly declared rights of the military men, one of which provided that no one can be removed from his post, or submitted to disciplinary punishment, without a court martial, and that was why I asked that those rights should be applied to me. But my Chief of Staff, Major-General Alexeieff, persuaded me to take up a

different position, namely, that I was acting quite lawfully within the existing and unchanged laws, as I was largely bound to do, in letting my Chief know that I did not see the possibility of executing the task which was put on me; and further to ask why, in regard to me, they did not apply the right of a military man, proclaimed by the Provisional Government. This telegram I sent to General Brussiloff, who took the post of Generalissimo. About June 16th I received information that General Brussiloff was coming to Minsk. A guard of honour was sent to meet him. By chance the train of the Generalissimo arrived at the station of Minsk twenty minutes earlier than the appointed time, and that is why I was not at the station.

Having arrived at the station, I learnt from Brussiloff that the Provisional Government had changed its decision, and had given an order for me to be attached to the Generalissimo. Then we went with Brussiloff to the sector of the Army where the last preparations were being made for the offensive, which was fixed for the middle of July. General Brussiloff afterwards went to visit other troops, but I did not accompany him, because I could not have avoided referring to the causes of my resignation except at the price of severely criticising the Provisional Government. This I did not wish to do before the troops, because I did not wish to lessen the authority of this Government, which was already not very great. Before leaving I asked Brussiloff to send my successor to Minsk as soon as possible.

It seemed to me incomprehensible that the Provisional Government, which considered me unsuitable to take the post of General-in-Chief, did not give me at once instructions to vacate my post, in favour of one of the senior commanders, as always happens in similar cases. Before leaving, I told Brussiloff that after leaving my post I would not

come to Mohileff, but would go to a Caucasian watering-place for leave.

At last, on June 21st, General Denikin, who had before occupied the post of Chief of Staff at the "Stafka," arrived at Minsk. In giving over the post to Denikin, I could make my farewell order to the troops of the western front (see Appendix III). Some days before, wanting to say good-bye to my subordinates, I proposed to those willing, to meet at the appointed hour in the building of the staff officers' mess. Knowing that my leaving had aroused varying comments I wanted to explain why I considered it morally wrong for me to continue to occupy such a responsible post. Besides the reasons which I mentioned during the conference in the Mary's Palace, I had the other hope that my voluntary leaving would bring the Petrograd leaders to their senses, and make them understand that probably something really serious was happening, when the man who had given all his strength to the beloved work, and who had reached a position which rarely falls to the lot of a military man, cast it all aside.

I may confess that I gave myself the satisfaction of saying some pleasant words on the address of the Provisional Government. I said that I was accused of the sharp manner in which I expressed my opinion to the Provisional Government; when I wanted to resign, I drew attention to the fact that I never had two languages, one for my subordinates and another for my Chiefs, as also I did not have two languages, one for gentlemen and — I pointed to those present — and the other for lackeys — pointing afar. I did not, I said, belong to the class of invertebrate beings; that I never bent my back before Tsars, so, naturally, I would not bend before those new autocrats. Never before had I addressed such an attentive audience, or one which so eagerly listened

to every word. A great effort of will was required to continue my speech calmly to the end. It was the cry of the troubled soul, into it penetrated the whole bitterness of what was passing in the land, in it one could hear the anxiety for the near future.

My nearest colleagues and assistants turned to me with a farewell address. First of all spoke the priest of the Staff, and, according to the Russian custom, he, in the name of all the people present, blessed me with the image of Saint Vasili the Great, my patron. Such moments naturally leave an indelible impression. It was not the usual farewell before taking a new post, which had happened to me more than once, but it was a farewell to all the past, to all that was dear to me, to all to which I had given over thirty years of my life and service. It was a farewell with the possibility, at least in the near future, of giving active help to my country in the moment when she needed every conscientious worker. The decision taken by me was taken after a long struggle. I admitted that, remaining, I could serve those elements of the military power of Russia, a power which she needed the most. But, on the other hand, I could not admit that, in executing the instructions of the Provisional Government, which in its turn was the blind executor of the irresponsible "Soviets," I should put my energy and knowledge to prepare what would reveal the helpless state of the Russian Army during the expected offensive. I could not take upon my conscience the flow of innocent blood in the coming advance, an advance which would only end in the defeat of those few regiments which still retained fighting capability and leaving behind the mass of the Army which would be unable to push back the weakest counter-attack of our enemies. Unfortunately, what happened in the future confirmed my fears, even exceeded them.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE ELECTION OF THE COSSACKS' ATAMAN — GENERAL KALEDIN — MY ARREST AND CONFINEMENT IN THE FORTRESS OF PETER AND PAUL — DEPARTURE TO ENGLAND

On July 20th General Denikin arrived at Minsk with General Markoff, whom he destined for the post of Chief of his Staff, and two days after I left the Front, having acquainted General Denikin with all possible details of the future active operations, as well as with the political spirit of the Army.

A Commissary of the Provisional Government had already been appointed to the front. He arrived at Minsk about the middle of May, and came to see me, but he could not explain what were his functions, rights, and duties. I telegraphed to Prince Lvoff asking him to let me know by whose instructions the newly arrived commissary, Vyrouboff, would be directed in his activity at the front, wishing to give my opinion when I should be acquainted with the reason of instituting such an appointment. I received the reply that the instructions were being considered. When Vyrouboff again came to me I showed him the telegram, and told him that before the instructions were received I did not see anything in which he could engage. Besides, I understood his work to be that of an agent of the Government, who would help the General-in-Chief in his relations with the population of the place, and with the different electoral institutions which had arisen in the country instead of the abolished ad-

ministration. Until my actual departure I did not receive any instructions from the Provisional Government, nor did I hear anything about Vyrouboff; he did not come to see me, and did not show any activity. In such conditions his presence did not disturb me in the least.

As I have already said, I had intended going to Kislovodsk in the Caucasus, to the mineral waters. My way lay by Novotcherkask, the principal town of the province of the "Troops of the Don." In Novotcherkask was assembled for a conference the military circle of Cossacks, an electoral institution comprising about 400 people. This electoral institution of the Cossacks was in existence from long ago until the reign of Peter the Great. Its functions at that time appertained to economic questions, the election of the "Ataman" and the election of the Council of the latter, which was termed the "Government of the Troops of the Don." With the evolution of March, this institution was re-established.

For the last two centuries the Cossack assembly had been preserved as a tradition and ceremony, when a new ataman received the emblems of his office. But since the time of Peter the Great, the Cossack atamans had not been elected by the Cossacks, but had been chosen by the Emperors. This change had arisen owing to the treachery of the "Hetman" (Ataman) of Little Russia, Mazeppa, who passed with his troops to the side of the King Charles XII of Sweden before the battle of Poltava in 1709.

On my way to the Caucasus I decided to stop at Novotcherkask. I was interested in the procedure of the Cossack assembly and the ceremony of electing the Ataman, and I wished also to see what spirit prevailed among the Cossacks of the Don. From the newspapers I had concluded that this meeting, with all its democratic pretensions, was quite differ-

ently disposed than the Soviets of Workmen's and Soldiers' deputies. The Cossack Assembly was elected by the entire population of the Province of the Don, on the system of the universal vote. Among the number of the elected was a woman.

I arrived at Novotcherkask on June (25th), at three o'clock in the morning. I could find no accommodation in the hotels and had to take advantage of an invitation from one of my comrades Zerebkoff, whose old parents lived in Novotcherkask. The old Zerebkoff, more than eighty years of age, was at that time the only Cossack Adjutant-General of Nicolai II, and enjoyed great respect among Cossacks. In his house I found hospitality, learned what was happening in the Cossack circles, and further I found that General Kaledin lived on the first floor in the same house. Not long since General Kaledin had commanded the 8th Army on the south-western front, but he did not get on well with General Brusiloff, under the conditions of the Revolution. Early in the morning, General Zerebkoff and I went to the Summer Theatre, where the Cossack Assembly was to meet, and entered the box of the ataman where Kaledin was already sitting with his wife. General Kaledin was married to a Frenchwoman.

Scarcely had I entered the box, before some of my former subordinates recognised me, and one of them went on the stage and spoke something in the ear of the President of the Assembly, Bogaevsky. When a member who was speaking had finished, Bogaevsky turned to the assembly and informed them that they were honoured by the presence of the former Commander-in-Chief of the western front. All the members rose from their seats and greeted me with applause. Some asked that I would take the chair. I was greatly pleased to have the opportunity of meeting the Cos-

sacks of the Don, and of expressing to them my views on the present position of things, and about the rôle which the Cossacks might play in these difficult hours in which Russia lived. On taking the chair I told them how comforting it was to know that the revolutionary intoxication which had seized the whole of Russia had not turned their heads, as the words "freedom" and "liberty" were no new phrases to the Cossacks. The love of freedom had created the Cossacks; it directed them in social life; and their special liberties had always been confirmed by a special decree of Emperors when they ascended the throne. But, understanding what it meant themselves, the Cossacks would realise that freedom could be combined with military discipline, the maintenance of which had made the Cossacks a splendid army which was always at the disposal of the Military Chiefs as a reliable weapon. Russian life was so complicated that, once I had entered upon it, my speech became long, in spite of myself. I had talked for more than an hour before I noticed it; and knowing that the Assembly had its own business to transact I wanted to leave the chair, but the members of the Assembly persistently demanded that I should continue, and finish all that I had to say. From the spirit of the Council, from the attention with which I had been listened to I could see that they had nothing in common with the spirit of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Soviets.

My further attendances at the Conference convinced me more than ever. It was quite apparent that the people had assembled, not for the discussion of "abstract" questions of politics or rights, but for the arrangement of their own affairs, and the establishment of orderly administration in their own province.

In the intervals I conversed with the members, with soldier Cossacks as well as officers. I gathered the same impres-

sion from all these little talks. They discussed names of candidates for the post of the Ataman. The majority were for General Kaledin. Of all the Cossacks he was the one who had most distinguished himself during the war. But at first Kaledin obstinately refused his candidature, and only yielded at the persistent exhortation of the Cossacks. On the evening of the last conference, the election of the Ataman was to be determined and the ceremony observed of presenting to the Ataman the so-called *berdish,* a long sceptre not less than two metres long, with silver top and an inscription which identified it as an historic emblem dating back to before the time of Peter the Great.

This presentation is made by the President of the Assembly in historic words always uttered on this occasion. The Ataman replies, promising to serve faithfully the interests of the Cossacks and the Don birthright. On the next day the Ataman, bearing the sceptre accompanied by the members of the Assembly and the standards of the Cossacks, proceeds from the Military Administration to the Cathedral where a solemn service takes place. At its conclusion, the Ataman goes to the square on which are paraded the Cossack troops of all the garrison, and standing on a high platform, he receives from the hand of the President of the Assembly the second emblem of his power, the gold mace which is very like a long marshal's baton with a crown and cross at the end. Prayers are said by the clergy, and the Ataman, with the baton in his hand, swears faithfulness to the Cossacks. When the clergy have retired from the Cathedral the Ataman, bearing his mace, inspects the troops, who then file off before him.

There was a rather large garrison in Novotcherkask made up of reserve units of soldiers preparing to reinforce the Army. Directly after the Revolution this garrison, in com-

mon with others, had chosen a Soviet of deputies, but from the start of the Assembly the relations between it and the Soviet were hostile. During the Cossack Assembly the question had been raised of dissolving the Soviet. But it was finally referred to the Ataman and to the Government of the Don. Not one detachment of the garrison, nor the Soviet, took part in the ceremony when the Ataman was invested. The Soviet even decided to arrest him. But, fortunately, this decision was not acted upon, because a collision of arms and shedding of blood would have been inevitable.

The Circle of the Don, in its strife with the Workmen's and Soldiers' Committees, which were hostile to the Cossacks, could lean on two Cossack divisions, which waited on the Don to be dispatched to the Caucasus with the one object of giving help to the English Mesopotamian Army (see Chapter XXI).

That same evening I said good-bye to my hospitable hosts at whose house I had lived for about a week, and went to Kislovodsk, to the mineral springs where my wife had preceded me. In Kislovodsk I met several military men who, like myself, had left the Army because the new conditions made it impossible for them to remain at the head of the troops. Among them was General Russky, who had not long left the post of Commander-in-Chief on the northern front at the request of the Government. Three weeks after my arrival in the Caucasus I learned from the newspapers of the defeats which our troops had suffered in Galicia. Though the first actions seemed to be successful, they led to the capture of the former capital of Red Russia, Galitch. In the telegrams hurriedly sent out to local papers appeared the messages of the Committee of the south-western front, sent to the Generalissimo and the Minister of War. These

GENERAL GOURKO GENERAL RUSSKY

At Kislovodsk

messages indicated not only the complete disorganisation of our Army and its reserves, but in what degree those who wrote the telegrams had lost their heads. I at once sent a telegram to the Minister of War, Kerensky, with a copy to Brussiloff. In it I protested that it was unpardonable that the military censorship should permit the publication of such a telegram. It not only informed the enemy of the disorder which had occurred on the attacking front, but, besides, it clearly demonstrated the perplexity and helplessness of the military committees, the influence of which on the troops was no secret to the Germans. Information of that sort gave gratuitously into our adversaries' hands a new weapon to inspire them to continue the energetic advance, and to raise the moral of their own troops. I further pointed out that to continue the offensive by drawing the best elements from the Army for the formation of the so-called "storming" battalions, meant to lose from the beginning of a battle the only combative elements of our troops, and would leave the remainder to become the easy prey of the enemy. To pursue offensive operations under such conditions, I added, was sacrificing unnecessarily rivers of blood, and was not only losing without any profit, but was extremely dangerous, if not criminal.

I received no reply to this telegram to the War Minister, but two days later during the night a message was brought to me signed by General Brussiloff, asking General Russky and myself to proceed without any delay to General Headquarters for a conference with the Provisional Government. An express train was placed at our disposal, and the Conference itself waited for our arrival. General Russky and I left the same evening, hoping to reach Mohileff on the third day. But the following night I received a telegram signed by General Loukomsky, who succeeded General Denikin as

Chief of the General Staff. In it, on behalf of Brussiloff, he asked me not to come to Mohileff, as the circumstances were changed. Had I received this intimation before leaving Kislovodsk, I should probably not have started, but now that I was on the way I decided to continue my journey. On the next morning, at Rostoff, I had a second telegram, in which, excusing himself for the trouble caused to me, General Brussiloff again asked me not to come to the General Headquarters. Only on arrival at Mohileff did I learn the reasons for this invitation and counter-invitation. The catastrophe to the Army of General Korniloff had troubled, not only the High Command, but the Provisional Government. They were now convinced how low the combative spirit of the Army had fallen. The success of the so-called Revolutionary regiments on their first appearance on July 1st was at once wiped out by the enemy. The heroic "Revolutionary Regiments" received for the immortal glory of their deeds, red flags! and on the next day they were driven from their positions and compelled to retreat to their starting-point. If the success of the enemy was not developed it was only because they were Austrian troops. The newspapers were ordered to keep silent, under the pretext of keeping things secret, as if the circumstances which brought to an end the first advance of the Revolutionary Army was not as well known to him as to us.

The presence of Kerensky, who visited the reserve divisions and made encouraging speeches, did not help to raise the spirits of the men. Someone said of him that during this period he played the rôle of a "petite Jeanne d'Arc," while searching for an outlet from the perilous position. Then the Government called the Conference at the General Headquarters, asking General Brussiloff to invite the Commanders-in-Chief General Alexeieff and Russky, and others

whom Brussiloff considered desirable. It was in accordance with this that General Brussiloff sent me an invitation, but when the Provisional Government heard of it they let General Headquarters know that if I took part in the Conference their members would not come. At the same time as Russky and myself came General Alexeieff to General Headquarters, but because of the anxiety on his sector the Commander-in-Chief of the south-western front could not leave. Next morning Denikin was expected from Minsk. On his Front the offensive was at first postponed and then quite countermanded. Members of the Provisional Government were expected in the afternoon of the next day. The military members had gathered at Brussiloff's, and were engaged in a consideration of the existing position, before the members of the Provisional Government arrived at Mohileff, in which the advantages of my presence at Headquarters was realised. But in order that neither Brussiloff nor the Provisional Government should be embarrassed, I announced to Brussiloff that before the Conference began I would leave for Petrograd, where I had private business which, after my three years' absence, required my presence, as my visits to Petrograd on duty had not given me any time to attend to my personal affairs.

On account of the delay of the Kieff train, which passed by Mohileff to Petrograd, the members of the Provisional Government, Kerensky, and the Minister of the Exterior, Tereshtchenko, came to Mohileff while I was still waiting for the coupling of my waggon to the Petrograd train. Kerensky and Tereshtchenko came in the most luxurious Imperial train. The two men were brought by a train which was on forty-four axles, and at a time when, from the insufficiency of the coal, traffic was stopping on the railways. It is difficult to say if it was the boastfulness peculiar to all

upstarts, or if it was a case of carelessness, or the conscientious thought that the men who are in power ought to impress the crowd by sumptuousness. If such was the idea which directed the Government at this time, it would have been sufficient for them to mix with the crowd and to listen to expressed opinions. That which is seldom or not always forgiven with regard to the head of a State, who is in power by right of birth and, in the mind of the Russian nation, by the Will of God, is not forgiven in men who grasp the power, and are sprung from the people.

On the arrival of Kerensky, the following characteristic episode occurred. The Conference of the Committee was appointed at three o'clock P. M. General Brussiloff passed the whole morning in conversation with us who had come to Mohileff and then until lunch received the reports. That is why he did not go to the station to meet Kerensky. On this day I had refused to lunch at Brussiloff's, wishing to see in the officers' mess my former subordinates during the time of my winter residence in the General Headquarters. During lunch time the Quartermaster-General, Romanovsky, was called to the telephone. From the carriage of Kerensky his brother-in-law and chief of his Cabinet asked if the Generalissimo would come to the train of the Minister of War. By the order of General Loukomsky, Romanovsky answered that General Brussiloff had been busy all the morning and was now sitting down to lunch, and asked the members of the Provisional Government to come at four o'clock to the Conference at the house of the Governor. At the station, waiting for the departure of my train, I learnt from the officers of the Staff who came to wish me farewell that Kerensky, on receiving this answer, ordered General Brussiloff with the Chief of Staff, Loukomsky, to come to him to the train with reports. If one could not doubt the motives

which directed Kerensky in the desire of travelling in the Imperial trains, here one could not be mistaken in the motive that guided him in ordering the Generalissimo to meet the train before he would come to the Conference. Three days afterwards the replacing of Brussiloff in the post of Commander-in-Chief by General Korniloff occurred. Naturally the whole General Staff was talking about this as the result of Brussiloff not going to meet Mr. Kerensky at the station.

The next day I was in Petrograd, which in its general aspect had little changed. The only thing that struck was that at the corners of streets militiamen with white armlets and rifles on their left shoulder replaced the less warlike but more active policemen of former times. The military authorities were still so amiable that they gave for my use a military motor-car, as the means of travelling in the capital were rather difficult. I stopped at my private house, and expected to stay less than a week and then to go to Moscow. At this time, at Moscow, it was intended, at the initiative of the Provisional Government, to call a special Conference attended not only by the democracy, but by the other classes of society, social institutions, and corporations. I had not lost hope of receiving a mandate from some society to assist at the Conference, and take part in it. These steps I meant to take in Moscow itself. But events which occurred made it impossible for me to go.

Early in the morning of August 4th in the private house in which I stopped, one could hear continued bell-ringing. When the servant opened the door of the house there did not come in, but rushed in, not less than ten armed soldiers with an officer at the head and began to spread themselves all over the house. The officer first met my wife, whom he asked if I were there and requested her to show him the room I occupied. I saw the officer entering, but did not

notice the armed men who followed him. I met him with a sharp remark about the unwarranted intrusion into a private house at such an early hour, however important might be the errand, but the officer at once answered me that he had an order to arrest me. During this time the room was filled with a crowd of armed soldiers. At my request to show me any papers they might have, they showed me a letter of small size, I should say of ladies' note-paper, in the personal hand-writing of Kerensky giving orders to Lieutenant Kouzmin, "On receiving this I order you to arrest General Gourko," and signed "A. Kerensky." I was struck by the pin-point, quite unmanly writing. At the same time Lieutenant Kouzmin declared that he was obliged to make a search, but for this he was awaiting the judicial authorities. He proposed to me to follow him without waiting for the search. I refused this, declaring that it was not guaranteed to me that they were incapable of putting among my papers those that did not belong to me. To such a declaration Lieutenant Kouzmin agreed, and we began to wait for the arrival of the judicial authorities.

Lieutenant Kouzmin was the assistant of the Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd Military District. This post, directly after the Revolution, was occupied by General Korniloff, who was chosen by the Provisional Government, and was now replaced by General Vasilkovsky, who served in the Cossack troops, but who did not belong to the Cossack element. Vasilkovsky was friendly with such people as Tchernoff, the future Minister of Agriculture who led the socialistic agricultural reforms, and, at the same time, during the days before the Revolution was seeking influence for more rapid promotion from Grand Dukes and Duchesses, the common type of person who after the Revolution entered into power.

From conversation which arose by telephone I understood that the judicial authorities would not come. Afterwards it was explained that the Minister of Justice refused to sanction the decision of the Provisional Government to call me before the Court, as he did not see any crime in my actions. The letter of March 20th, which I wrote three days after the Revolution to the Emperor Nicolai II, could not even serve them as an excuse which they could present. They did not find its contents criminal, and besides this, the amnesty granted by the Provisional Government a week after the Revolution pardoned any such action on my part. For the search two young officers who served in the Inquiry Department were brought in; they had, of course, to obey, especially as under the exceptional conditions during the time of the war there were no specified formalities for carrying out a search. It was already 11 A. M. when I got into the motor with Lieutenant Kouzmin and two soldiers armed with rifles; two dragoons followed us on horseback. In this way the cortège traversed the principal streets of the capital, awakening the astonishment of the crowd. The Minister of Justice declined giving instructions about my confinement in Peter and Paul fortress, and that is why I was sent to the Staff of the military District Headquarters to be put into a room guarded by two sentinels. On the second day of my stay a circumstance occurred which obliged the Provisional Government to send me to the fortress of Peter and Paul. To the chief of the guard, and then to General Vasilkovsky, came an officer from one of the Guards infantry regiments, to ascertain if the report about my arrest were true which had appeared in the newspapers. The conversation took rather a sharp turn, though it occurred in the presence of subordinates. After this the officer departed, but during the night I was awakened by Lieutenant Kouzmin, who stated

that they were sending me to the fortress of Peter and Paul.

After my arrival at this place they read to me the rules which were to be observed with respect to all who were confined in the bastion of Troubetzkoy. This is one of the oldest buildings in the fortress, where, in former times, condemned political criminals were kept. Rules had been made by Kerensky and confirmed by him in the capacity of Minister of Justice. The first paragraph said that in the bastion of Troubetzkoy of the fortress of Peter and Paul persons could be confined only by exclusive orders of the Minister of Justice, which at this time Kerensky was not. To my question to the commandant why this rule was not observed with regard to me, he answered very confusedly that, in spite of himself, he was obliged to obey the formal order received from the Provisional Government. The regime to which those confined in the bastion were subject, I must say, if applied in regard to those who were condemned by the Court, was not especially severe, but if applied to those incarcerated only by the instructions of the Minister of Justice and, moreover, against his opinion, cannot be said to have been an improvement on the behaviour of the former Government during the time of the Monarchy.

Five days after my stay at the bastion I was told that the regime would be in a great measure changed for the better. I afterwards learnt that the reason for it was the confinement in the bastion of some Bolsheviks. After their confinement they immediately requested the Government to be allowed to wear their own clothes and not those of the prison, and to receive food from their houses or restaurants, and that the time of their daily walk should be longer. At this time the Provisional Government, unable to find a reason for my accusation, but obliged to conform to the general

opinion and to the voice of the Press, was looking for a loophole to justify my arrest. Almost every three days they made new decisions. One day it was decided to give me my freedom; then this decision was changed before my liberation. I should have to be dismissed from military service. At last they decided to edict a law by which the Minister of the Interior and Minister of War by mutual agreement could give instructions to send any person beyond the frontier of the country if they thought him dangerous to the new form of Government, and to the preservation of the "liberty" attained by the Revolution. In this way the liberty of every separate person on the grounds of this law depended upon the opinion of two persons who were not obliged to give an account to anybody of their doings. But much earlier than this the commandant of the fortress had received an order to give me other quarters in the fortress, and to change the regime which was observed in regard to me. It is sufficient to say that under new conditions everyone could call upon me by permission of the commander, who, I must say, did not refuse it to anybody. My wife was allowed to live with me and she could freely leave the fortress or return to it at any hour. Questions to the persons belonging to the Provisional Government about the reason for my arrest and the time of my release produced promises, which were not carried out at the end, the Provisional Government declaring that they were obliged to send me abroad as a person "dangerous to the Republic." This was at the time when the Republic was not yet declared by the decree of the Government.

When the Government decided on my departure abroad, the difficulty arose that I was on active service. It was necessary to find a reason for my release from the service. To my wife came General Adrianoff, sent by the Provisional

Government asking her to persuade me to apply for my resignation. My wife refused to give me such a message. At last, on September 8th, at night, two commissaries came from the Provisional Government and told me the proposal of the Government that I should go abroad in the shortest time possible. I agreed to this only on condition that I should have three days for arranging my private affairs. At the same time they declared that in the case of my refusing to carry out the decision of the Provisional Government I should be sent, accompanied by a convoy, to distant Siberia. One may ask, was there a difference between the instructions of the Provisional Government and those which were abolished by them? Perhaps the difference was that in former times a person who was in the service would not be subjected to such treatment before he was dismissed. With regard to me they hesitated to give the order for my dismissal. In the end they decided it in a most simple way: an order was issued announcing, without any reason, my dismissal.

It ought to be said that during my month's stay in the fortress, except the commander, I had not seen any agent of the Government and still less of the Judicial Department. The Provisional Government intended to send me abroad via Sweden, but it was not in their power, as the Bolsheviks who ruled in Helsingfors did not observe any instruction of the Provisional Government, and decided not to pass through Finland persons who were sent abroad by the instructions of the Provisional Government. During the three days in which I was free in Petrograd, the attempt of General Korniloff to inaugurate a thorough reform in the replacing of several persons in the Provisional Government took place. Without going into the details of this affair, it is enough to say that the previous instructions for

occupying Petrograd by the troops faithful to the Provisional Government were made, not only with the knowledge of Kerensky, but according to his instructions. But these instructions were no secret to the Petrograd Soviets. Kerensky, questioned by the Soviets, at once denied his loyalty to Korniloff, and not only gave instructions about the sending away of the troops from the capital, but even dismissed Korniloff from his post. For the latter, however, the lot was already cast. He had nothing else to do but to try and carry out the plan agreed upon. In the case of his success the entire difference of the affair would be that Kerensky would not be of the future Government as was the intention. The fact that the authorities in Petrograd, who should have been loyal to Korniloff, became hostile brought the plan to complete failure. Korniloff's "Coup d'État" did not even come to an armed collision.

When it was clear that it was impossible for the Government to send me by Finland, it came to the conclusion that it was necessary to arrest me again. When I was informed of this I demanded to be given time for arranging my own affairs, after which I proposed to return by myself to the fortress, seeing no sense in repeating the comedy of my arrest. On the fourth night after my release from the fortress I voluntarily returned there. Nevertheless some newspapers alleged that I was trying to avoid arrest, but was caught and was accompanied to the fortress by a strong escort. If it entered my plans I would not have considered it a crime nor a breach of the law, because I considered my arrest unlawful. But, in order to tell the truth, I wanted to publish in the papers a contradiction of this news and an explanation of how events had happened. However, the censor did not allow the newspapers to publish such an explanation. It was only a small incident confirm-

ing how by this time the shadow of the freedom of the Press had disappeared. It was just then, when all the numerous Soviets which had spread over the whole of Russia, and the Provisional Government with them, announced the coming counter-Revolution. But when the newspapers wanted to draw attention to the fact that the counter-Revolution had already happened, thanks to the fact that not one of the liberties which were proclaimed by the Revolution could be realised, the Press was not allowed to publish it.

After a week of my second confinement in the fortress the Provisional Government decided to give me permission to leave the country by Archangel. The Provisional Government was apparently so interested at my departure that it personally asked the British authorities in Archangel through the British Embassy to help me to pass through organisations of the Soviets at that place, as they might not consider the instructions of the Provisional Government. The kindness of the British authorities in Archangel was shown to me in full. On September 19th I left Petrograd, and on the 21st, before evening, Admiral Kemp, who commanded the British naval forces in Archangel, offered me and my wife the use of his yacht, on which he displayed his flag, while awaiting the day of the departure of the English passenger ship, the *Umthali*.

In such a way, two days after my departure from Petrograd, thanks to the help of the Provisional Government and the kindness of the British authorities, I found myself on English territory. But I only arrived on English soil on October 15th, 1917. Our voyage on board the *Umthali* and the stops which we were obliged to make on the way, lasted about three weeks.

GENERAL GOURKO IN THE FORTRESS OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL
This photograph was taken by Madame Gourko, who voluntarily shared her husband's captivity

MADAME GOURKO AS A SISTER OF CHARITY

APPENDIX I

THE TSAR'S ORDER OF THE DAY

ORDER OF THE ARMY AND NAVY

DECEMBER 25TH, 1916

IT is now more than two years since Germany, in the midst of peace and after secretly preparing over a long period to enslave all the nations of Europe, suddenly attacked Russia and her faithful Ally, France. This attack compelled England to join us and take part in our struggle.

The complete disdain which Germany showed to principles of international law as demonstrated by the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, and her pitiless cruelty towards the peaceful inhabitants in the occupied provinces, little by little united the Great Powers of Europe against Germany and her ally, Austria.

Under the pressure of the German troops, which were well provided with the technical aids to warfare, Russia as well as France were compelled in the first year of the war to give up a portion of their territory, but this temporary reverse did not break the spirit of our faithful Allies, nor of you, my gallant troops. In time, by the concentrated efforts of the Government, the inequalities between our own and the German technical resources were gradually reduced. But long before this time, from the autumn of 1915, our enemy was unable to occupy the smallest portion of Russian soil, and in the spring and summer of the current year suffered a number of severe defeats and assumed the defensive along the whole front.

His strength is apparently waning, but the strength of Russia and her gallant Allies continues to grow without failing. Germany is feeling that the hour of her complete defeat is near, and near also the hour of retribution for all her wrongdoings and for the violation of moral laws. Similarly, as in the time when her war strength was superior to the strength of her neighbours, Germany suddenly de-

clared war upon them, so now, feeling her weakness, she suddenly offers to enter into peace negotiations with her enemies indissolubly united against her.

Particularly she desires to begin these negotiations and to complete them before the entire elucidation of the degree of her weakness and before the definite loss of her military power. At the same time she is creating a false impression about the strength of her Army by making use of her temporary success over the Roumanians, who had not succeeded in gaining experience in the conduct of modern warfare.

But if, originally, Germany was in the position to declare war and fall upon Russia and her ally, France, in her most favourable time, having strengthened in war-time the Alliance, among which is to be found mighty England and noble Italy, this Alliance in its turn has also the possibility of entering into peace negotiations at such a time as it considers favourable for itself.

This time has not yet arrived. The enemy has not yet been driven out of the provinces occupied by her. The attainment by Russia of the tasks created by the war — the possession of Constantinople and the Dardanelles, as well as the creation of a free Poland from all three of her until now separated provinces — has not yet been guaranteed.

To conclude peace at this moment would mean the failure to utilise the fruits of the untold trials of you, heroic Russian troops and Fleet.

These trials, and still more the sacred memory of those noble sons of Russia who have fallen on the field of battle, do not permit the thought of peace until the final victory over our enemies. Who dares to think that he who brought about the beginning of the war shall have it in his power to conclude the war at any time he likes?

I do not doubt that every faithful son of Holy Russia, those who under arms are fighting in the firing lines, as well as those peacefully working in the interior for the increase of her war strength or the creation of her industry, will be convinced that peace can only be given to the enemy after he has been driven from our borders; and then only when, finally broken, he shall give up to us and our faithful Allies reliable proof of the impossibility of a repetition of the treacherous attack and a firm assurance that he will keep to these promises. By the strength of these guarantees he will be bound to the fulfilment in times of peace of the engagements which he will undertake.

Let us be firm in the certainty of our victory and the All Highest

will bless our standards and will cover them afresh with glory, and will give to us a peace worthy of your heroic deeds, my glorious troops — a peace for which the future generation will bless your memory, which will be sacred to them.

NICOLAI.

APPENDIX II

GENERAL GOURKO'S LETTER TO THE TSAR, WRITTEN FOUR DAYS AFTER HIS ABDICATION

In these grievous days that all Russia is living through, and which cannot fail to affect you most painfully of all, allow me, Sire, out of heart-felt affection, to send you the following lines, in the conviction that you will see in this merely the need I feel of telling you with what pain I and millions of other faithful sons of Russia have learnt of the magnanimous act of your Majesty.

Actuated by your wishes for the welfare and happiness of Russia, you preferred to take upon yourself all the consequences and the burden of what had occurred rather than to subject the country to all the horrors of a long internecine struggle, or — what would have been still worse — to expose it to the triumph of the enemy's arms. Your conduct will receive its due reward from history, and the grateful memory of the people. The knowledge that in this grievous moment you decided without hesitation on an act of the greatest self-sacrifice for the sake of the integrity and the welfare of our country, to which, following the example of your crowned ancestors, you were always loyal, indeed the most loyal servant and well-wisher, will serve you as a worthy reward for the unexampled sacrifice you have made on the altar of your country.

I do not find words to express my respect for the greatness of the sacrifice you have made, both in your own case and in the case of your heir. I fully understand that you could not decide to give up to the service of the State your only son, who within four years would have to take within his hands, before they were strong enough, the reins of government. Moreover, there is little hope that by that time Russian life will have returned to its ordinary tranquil course. But the ways of the All Highest are inscrutable, and it may be it was He who guided you. It may be that you are keeping for your

son the possibility of a more regular and gradual education until he is mature, that he may make a wide study of political science and become acquainted with people and life, so that in due time, after a stormy period of life in the service of the State, the eyes of those that wish well to Russia will turn to him as the hope of Russia. Fully equipped with living experience and the knowledge that he has gained, he will then be able to take over his lawful heritage for the welfare and happiness of Russia.

But, apart from the comparatively distant future, it is impossible not to foresee the possibility that, after painful experience of internal troubles, after the reconstruction of the State and a form of government for which, historically and socially, the Russian people is far from being ready, have been tested, the country will again turn to its lawful Emperor and Anointed of God. The past history of peoples teaches us that in this there is nothing improbable, and the exceptional nature of the conditions under which the change of government has taken place in Petrograd, and the fact that to the majority of people this change was just as unexpected to us as it was to your Army, gives ground to suppose that this is extremely probable.

The possibility of this, however, involuntarily compels me to think of those events which now are taking place in Petrograd. The Provisional Government has now proclaimed and is carrying out a full amnesty of all those people who suffer punishment for political crimes, whether judicial or administrative. At the same time it is imprisoning your former faithful servants, who, if they offended in anything, acted at any rate within the bounds of the laws existing at that time. Such conduct with regard to them appears to infringe that very freedom which the people who have seized power proclaim on their banners.

But there is another side to this. If one can foresee the possibility that the country may wish to return to a state of law and order, then it is necessary that those who form a centre able to unite around themselves all who care, not for temporary power, but for regular development and for gradual evolution of the Russian people, must not be stopped by the memory that, in a time when their ideals were temporarily defeated, ***has not been obtained even, if necessary, by exceptional efforts the security and personal liberation,*** perhaps also the life of those the majority of whom in their time faithfully

and truly served their country, though guided perhaps by laws which were out of date, but nevertheless legally in force.

Allow me, Sire, to direct your attention to this fact merely because, in view of the tremendous events which are so quickly advancing upon you, you may not be able to realise all the importance of that step which in the future may have incalculable consequences, both for your dynasty and for the fate of Russia. Remembering your unfailing graciousness towards me during the few months when by your will I was called upon to be your closest assistant in the High Command, I flatter myself with the hope that you will accept with the same graciousness the out-pourings of my heart, which suffers anguish because of these days which threaten the life of Russia, and that you will believe that I have been guided merely by the feeling of devotion to the Russian Monarch which I have inherited from my ancestors, who always had the courage and the honesty in moments of danger to the Russian State to express to their Emperors their outspoken opinion and the whole truth.

Accept, Sire, my sincere wishes to see brighter days, which at the same time must herald the dawn of Russia renewed after her period of trial, and accept my feelings of unbounded devotion.

LUTSK,
March 4th (old style), 1917.

APPENDIX III

ORDER OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE WESTERN FRONT, JUNE 8TH, 1917

No 1832

31

TROOPS OF THE WESTERN FRONT,

As you have learned from the Ukaze of June 5th, issued by the Provisional Government, I have been retired from the Chief Command. Duty as I conceived it obliged me to declare to the Provisional Government that I did not see my way to justify the confidence that had been reposed in me in appointing me to the Chief Command of the Western Front.

At the same time the Government offered me the position of a General of Division; probably it would have been in the cavalry, as it was at the head of a cavalry division that I participated in the fighting during the opening months of the war. In principle I have no objection at all to this appointment, for there was nothing in the existing circumstances that could prevent me from doing my duty at the head of a division. Owing to its relative smallness I should have been able to enter into personal relations with this force and thus to exert a direct influence over it. Above all, I should have been able to exercise a most potent means of influence in case of emergency, in the course of the fighting, that is to say, the influence of personal example. Not only Commanders-in-Chief, but also the Commanders of Corps, who in the midst of a battle can abandon neither their Headquarter Staffs nor their posts of observation, are deprived of this influence.

While rigorously obeying that military discipline to safeguard which I have fought, I do not consider that I have the right to enter

into fuller details on this question. On taking my departure I turn to you, my dear colleagues and comrades in arms, and I declare my conviction that if the Russian troops be reassembled under the colours, solely to remain in the trenches, my presence among you is useless. But if you are really ready to strike a formidable blow at the enemy, this is possible only on one condition — the re-establishment of military discipline, not cruel, but sound and firm. Such discipline must be founded on the sense of duty which prevails among those who understand the meaning of that word. Such men are the faithful sons of our country, who need have no fear of the rigours of justice or of disciplinary measures, for these are not intended for them. The discipline which has its foundation in the possibility of retribution or punishment is necessary in the case of those who forget their duties towards their country. These always have formed, and always will, I am sure, form but an insignificant proportion of the Army. Nevertheless, a bad example is contagious. The result of this military discipline can only be advantageous to the army, for at all times it is only through discipline that troops have been enabled to prove themselves a faithful weapon and a sure instrument of victory. Never can an army suffer so much, never can so many lives be lost in vain as when troops losing their discipline escape from the control of their chiefs, thus turning the Army into an easy target for the enemy.

If the Russian Army wants to fight; if it has taken this decision as a result of the inflexible and free will of the people, the Army must place itself voluntarily under the sway of sound military discipline. Without that can there be no victory, no salvation of the country. If we in reality wish to be free sons of our country and worthy of the rights conquered for us by the Army and by the people, we must by our own free will impose on ourselves real duties. Of these the primary one for every soldier is that of submission to his Chief, and it is discipline that is the motive power of this submission. Another most important point in the life of a soldier is that he should have confidence in his Chiefs and in their long experience. If from the generals down to the youngest officers we demand that they meet the needs and wishes of the soldiers, then on his part the soldier must boldly and openly meet his officer and his Chief. Both must reciprocally recognise that they are, in the first place, men, and then the subordinate must be regarded by his superior as a man who wants

care and solicitude — and the superior must be regarded by his subordinate as being worthy of all confidence and respect.

This is my farewell to you.

After a period of service together, which, though brief, was spent in days that were exceptionally trying and painful, I offer you my cordial farewell greetings and also the expression of my profound gratitude for your service. If some among you have incorrectly and often in quite a contrary sense interpreted their rights and their obligations, and have thereby caused much mortification to myself, as well as to your more direct chiefs, others, on the other hand, have during the trying times through which we are passing set an example of loyal execution of duty and of fidelity to your sworn oath. Above all do I turn to you young officers and in particular to those among you who have grasped the nature of the changes that have been accomplished in Russia and in the Army, and have contrived to master the mind and the heart of your younger brothers-in-arms in order to lead them through these troublous days of liberty, acquired, but not always understood, towards the road of duty and justice. I am aware to what extent your path has been strewn with obstacles, but this has not checked you, and you have emerged from the trial with honour. You now gather the fruits of the troubles you have endured, and of which you were at times the victims, for as a recompense you have obtained the confidence and affection of your subordinates.

But a still greater reward awaits you in the stormy hour of warlike trial. I know that all of you have not arrived at this result, but in the case of the majority of you it was not lack of good will, but the unhappy circumstances that were the cause of that failure. Be not discouraged; work, strive to ameliorate your environment, and success will be yours. The greater the effort to attain this object, the greater will be the moral reward that success will bring you.

My thanks to you, my assistants, all Chiefs, superior and inferior. Do not think that I have not realised the difficulties of the onerous task you have accomplished. If some of you have had to retire from active service, the greater has been the merit of those who remained at their post to work in the reconstruction of the Army on new principles. Work without losing hope, for the hour is not far remote when at the price of your indefatigable labours and according to the measures of the central authorities the Army will be again a

redoubtable weapon directed against the enemy, against the adversary who already dreams of us as of a negligible force, a force that no longer bars his access to his object, which is the enslavement of the peoples, and the achievement of his greedy designs by treading under foot the rights of the whole of humanity.

My thanks to you, soldiers, my thanks to those who in these days of trouble have not allowed themselves to be carried away by the appeal incessantly repeated to destroy every scrap of order that regulates our lives, which could but lead to the triumph of the enemy in his struggle with an Army deprived of all power of resistance through decay. My thanks to those who have not allowed themselves to be overcome by the flattering counsel of the perfidious enemy and did not go to meet him, who was ready to give you the kiss of a Judas. In particular I express my thanks to those who, with all the strength of their moral influence, have constrained their shaken comrades to execute our sacred duty to the country and who by every means have revived the fighting spirit of our valiant regiments, in the profound consciousness of the justice of our cause and in the unshakable faith in the success of our arms, which we have raised in the defence of the peoples against enslavement by Germany and for establishing the right of the people to obtain a life of freedom and welfare for the whole of Russian life.

My thanks to you, disinterested workers of the Military Committees. It is on you that the whole burden rests of the restoration of order among the troops until the complete re-establishment of the authority of the Chiefs, wherever the authority has been shattered by the senseless and often involuntary acts of badly-balanced hotheads. In the consciousness of the responsibility which lies upon you, you are directing and pacifying the passions that have been unchained. But if much has been entrusted to you, much will be demanded. Work then to justify the confidence that has been reposed in you, and in full consciousness of the responsibility that rests on you, in the firm certainty that your labour is not in vain, that its final result must bring calm to the troubled spirits as well as the moral strengthening of the people and, as a final result, the victory. Work for the strengthening of the influence of the Chiefs, without whose support no warlike effort can lead to the success desired, and, as a consequence of the success, to universal peace.

May God's aid be with you all, from the humblest to the highest,

in your difficult and responsible though glorious task. As for myself, bear me no ill-will.

This Order to be read in all companies, squadrons, batteries, and commands.

(*Signed*) Commander-in-Chief of the Armies,
General of Cavalry
GOURKO.

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